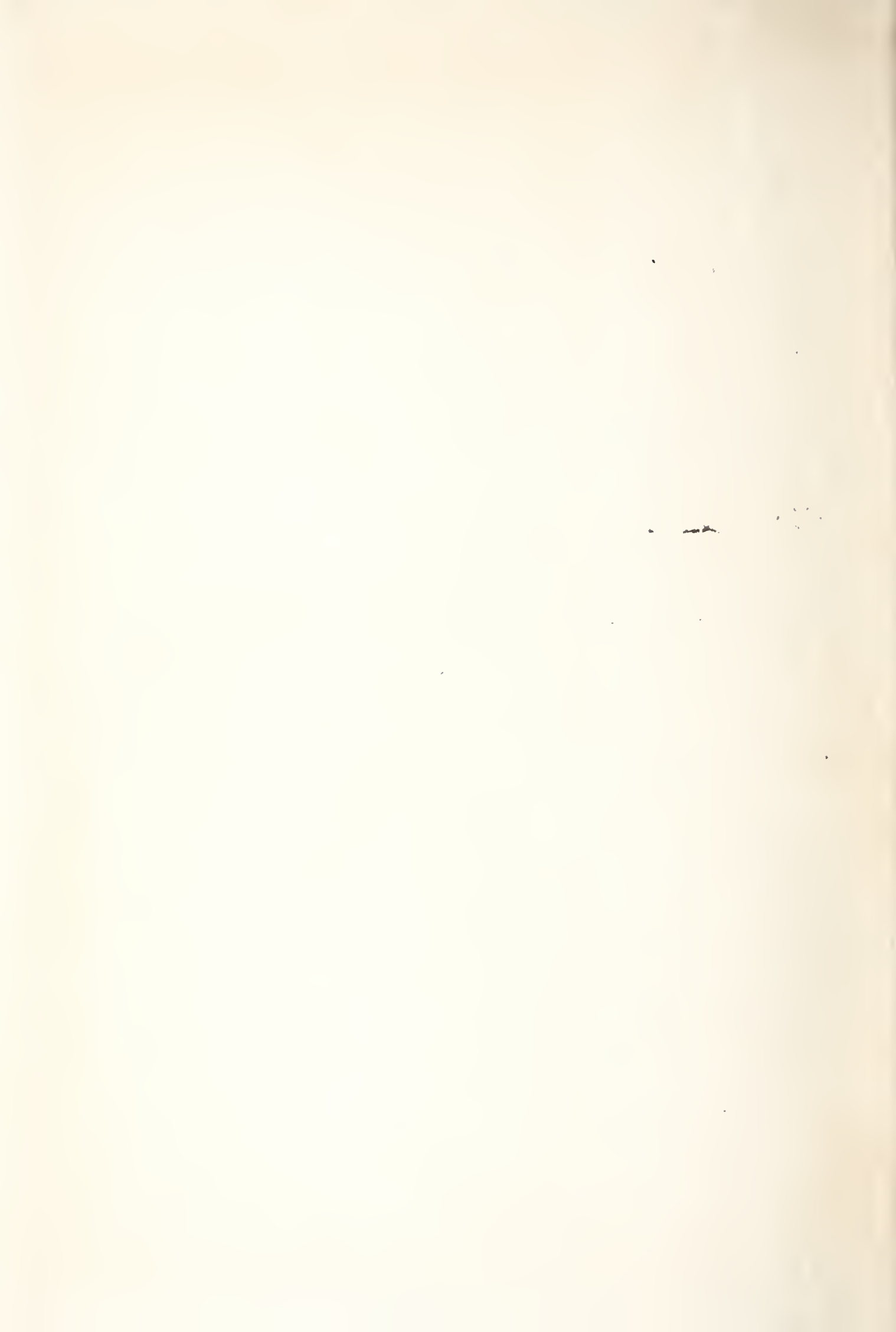


POEMS · IN · PRAISE · OF · PRACTICALLY · NOTHING



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Alice

From Mother

June 23-1930



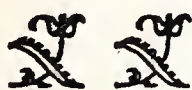
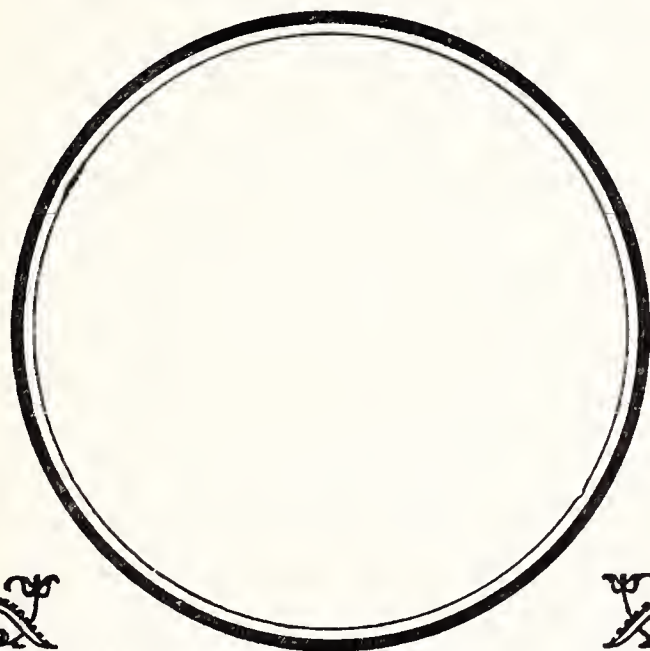
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**POEMS IN PRAISE OF  
PRACTICALLY NOTHING**



POEMS IN  
PRAISE OF



---

PRACTICALLY  
NOTHING

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SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN

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SAMUEL HOFFENSTEIN

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To  
EDITH MORGAN

SINCE, AS THEY SAY, THE RARE EXCEPTIONS PROVE  
THE RULE IN LIFE AND LETTERS, EVEN LOVE,  
THE RULE OF MY DISPRAISES SEEMS MORE TRUE  
BECAUSE OF THAT MOST RARE EXCEPTION, YOU.

Some of the verses in this book were first printed in *The New York World*, *The New York Tribune*, *Vanity Fair*, *The D. A. C. News*, and *Snappy Stories*.

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## PROEM



---

## *Proem*

---

How exquisite my sorrows look  
Neatly marshalled in a book,  
Hung on the iambic line  
In an orderly design!

See how smooth my trouble goes!—  
Printer, weep not on my woes,  
Lest your sympathetic grief  
Make a blot upon the leaf!

Sweetheart, sigh not for the drear  
Winter of my spirit's year,  
Lest it vanish—and I can't  
Manage the trochaic chant!

Let the winds of fortune blow  
To the metres that I know:  
There are always better times  
Waiting to corrupt our rhymes.





SONGS TO BREAK THE TEDIUM OF RIDING  
A BICYCLE, SEEING ONE'S FRIENDS, OR  
HEARTBREAK



---

*Songs to Break the Tedium of Riding a  
Bicycle, Seeing One's Friends, or Heartbreak*

---

I

Along the country roads there grow  
Willow-trees and Texaco,  
Mobiloids and marigold  
And other fruits of men and mould.  
Oh, how my town-tried heart desires  
To know the peace of Kelly Tires,  
To hear the robin in the grass  
Sing, "Socony," as I pass!  
Some day I shall fly the rut  
And build a small, bucolic hut,  
Trim a hedge and hop a stile,  
Walk my Camel for a mile,  
Milk a mid-Victorian cow—  
Eventually, but not now.

## II

My luck with the proverbial sex  
Should rile, torment me and perplex;  
Should turn my simple psyche sour  
As, *par exemple*, Schopenhauer.  
It should imbue me with disgust  
Of woman's misproportioned dust;  
Should make me look, with dubious eye,  
On every female passerby:  
Suspect the sting, mistrust the buzz—  
*Well*, my lad, it does, it does!

## III

When trouble drives me into rhyme,  
Which is two-thirds of all the time,  
What peace a thought like this can give—  
Great is the age in which we live!  
My heart is heavy, but I know  
They're working on the radio;  
That letters, by aerial post,  
Go every day from coast to coast.  
I may be sunk beyond repair,  
Drunk less on liquor than despair,  
And yet my heart leaps up when I  
Behold *Sweet Caporal* in the sky.  
Though winter-bare my solitude,  
Though heartbreak in its branches brood,

I know that future wars will be  
Fought by super-chemistry,  
And, therefore, loneliness and loss  
Are but a mask for applesauce;—  
For I am lord of life and death,  
Who flaunt this flaming shibboleth:—  
*No matter what the morrow brings,  
Inventors are inventing things!*

#### IV

Between the mighty legs of Death  
We play the schoolboy pranks of breath;  
Scrawl challenge on his sodden boots,  
The while he coils his cypress-roots.

#### V

I do not question Woman's place:  
She's entered in the human race;  
She has a natural turn of mind  
For propagation of her kind;  
She is—that is to say, a few—  
Fairly decorative too,  
And on her once maternal breast—  
The vogue is past—men used to rest.

If, in this golden age of dames,  
She stalks a few surprising claims,  
Attempts to puzzle and perplex  
Old Nature with a change of sex,  
And tumbles from her ancient shelf  
In trying to express herself—  
Ah, who am I to bid her stay,  
Nor try to shave the Mennen way!  
There may be some, whose ways are meek;  
Who dream submission to a sheik;  
Who'd like to waste their love and care  
And sweetness on a desert heir;  
Who are not fretting to be free  
Of orthodox biology;  
(If such there be, go mark one well,  
And hold her in some citadel!)  
But Woman, as they say in Greece,  
Is on the hoof for Bigger Fleece:  
Too long a serf, too long oppressed  
By butter 'n' egg men from the West,  
By whiskered juries, blunt of wit,  
Who take two hours to acquit.  
I hope she finds her proper niche,  
Her why and wherefore, what and which,  
For through the town I sadly roam,  
And note, her place is not the home.

VERSES DEMONSTRATING THAT NO MAN  
CAN BE UNHAPPY AMID THE INFINITE  
VARIETY OF THIS WORLD, AND GIVING THE  
READER CHOICE OF SEVERAL TITLES, THE  
AUTHOR'S FAVORITE BEING, "SOME PLAY  
GOLF AND SOME DO NOT"





---

*Verses Demonstrating That No Man Can Be  
Unhappy Amid the Infinite Variety of This  
World, and Giving the Reader Choice of  
Several Titles, the Author's Favorite Being,  
"Some Play Golf and Some Do Not"*

---

Oh, how various is the scene  
Whereon we spend our day!—I mean,  
Oh, how various is the scene  
Allowed to Man for his demesne!  
But let's get on—Hip, hip, hurray-o!  
Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
Who gave us such variety  
That none need discontented be;  
That each may find his proper niche:  
The poor, the maimed, the wretched rich,  
The saint (ha, ha!), the son—I mean,  
Oh, how various is the scene!—  
The earth, whose aspects countless are  
As bugs and sneezes in catarrh;

The changeful world so full of things,  
From happy deuces down to kings,  
That each, no matter how distressed  
May find some thing of in-ta-rest.

Consider first topography,  
Climate and geography:  
Here's the land and there's the sea;  
Here's a hill and there's a valley;  
Here's a street and there's an alley;  
Here's a mountain capped with snow;  
Yon, yes, yon's, a swell plateau;  
Here's a forest full of trees;  
There's a meadow full of fleas:—  
Oh, how various is the scene!  
(You know exactly what I mean.)  
Here is Paris, there is Rome;  
Hither's Newark, thither's Nome;  
Here is Kansas, yonder's Cork;  
Here is Cairo, there New York;  
Here the heathen, slightly bored,  
Hymns his freshly-baptized Lord,  
There's Detroit and Henry Ford:—  
Oh, how various is the scene!—  
(You know exactly what I mean.)  
Well, here it's cold and there it's hot;  
Here it's raining, there it's not;  
Here it's north and there it's south;  
Yon it's wet, but here, what drouth!

Here the tiger eats raw meat;  
There the walrus flaps his feet;  
Here it's dark and there it's light;  
First comes day, and then comes night;  
Here it's solid, yon it's air;  
Here it's here, and there it's there:—  
Oh, how various is the scene  
Allowed to Man for his demesne,  
So full of this and that and them,  
That living is a perfect gem;  
That each, no matter what his lot,  
May know it's cold while he is hot;  
May rapture find in deepest woe  
That there it's high while he is low.

Turn we now the other cheek,  
And note how various is the week;  
Now it's Thursday, now it's Sunday,  
Now it's Friday, now it's Monday—  
(Blessed be His lavish ways:  
There are even other days!)  
Tuesday, Saturday and Friday:—  
None is *your* day, none is *my* day;  
Each belongs to one and all—  
Sick or well or great or small:—  
Oh, how various is the scene  
Whereon we live—well, what I mean  
Is—wretched, poor, or blind, or lame,  
Sing we praises to His Name!

Now in ecstasy we trace  
The aspects of the human race:  
Some are men and some are women;  
Some—well, anyhow they're human;  
Some are short and some are tall;  
Some are big and some are small;  
Some are dark and some are fair;  
Some are bald and some have hair;  
Some have all their teeth, but most  
To dentists go and eat milk toast:—  
Oh, how various is the scene!—  
(You know exactly what I mean.)  
Well, some are lean and some are fat;  
Some are this and some are that;  
Some eat kidneys, some eat frogs;  
Some keep horses, some keep dogs;  
Some are colored, some are white;  
Half are sober, half are tight;  
Some wear tweed and some wear serge;  
Most have some peculiar urge;  
Some have money, some have hives;  
Some have hope and some have wives;  
Some to crime for profit go;  
Some hold office, high and low;  
Some have gravel, some have gout;  
Some like home, but most go out;  
Some are cold and some are hot;  
Some play golf and some do not!

Oh, how various is the scene  
Allowed to Man for his demesne,  
That each, no matter what his blows,  
May find a poultice for his woes;  
May drive his pains and bills away  
With tiger, walrus, night or day;  
With north or south or west or east,  
Or various kinds of bug and beast;  
With Latvia or Rumania,  
Greece or Pennsylvania,  
Newark, Paris, Akron, Cork,  
Cairo, Oslo or New York;  
With Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday,  
Thursday, Saturday or Monday;  
With tall or short, or stern or slack,  
Or those who like their coffee black;  
With those in tweed, or those in serge;  
With those who dare, or on the verge;  
With cold or hot or fat or lean—  
Oh, how various is the scene!—  
So full of so and so and so,  
That none, come weal or woe, woe, woe,  
Amid such swell variety  
Can ever discontented be.



**POEMS OF PASSION CAREFULLY RESTRAINED  
SO AS TO OFFEND NOBODY**







---

*Poems of Passion Carefully Restrained So as  
to Offend Nobody*

---

I

You have a most attractive pan,  
And I'm a very foolish man,  
And, what between the two, I fell  
As deep as Dante into hell;  
But do you, in your triumph, think  
I'll stay forever on the blink,  
And pine and pale and waste away  
And grow cadaverous and gray—  
A wreck, a rum, a shard? Well, maybe  
You are right about it, baby!

## II

When you're away, I'm restless, lonely,  
Wretched, bored, dejected; only  
Here's the rub, my darling dear,  
I feel the same when you are here.

## III

Psycho-analyzed, I stand  
And meditate your little hand;  
Your lost, evasive eyes, that seem  
To lean upon me while they scheme;  
And thus contemplative, I know  
Why I adore and need you so:—  
When I was six or seven or eight,  
In that divine, pre-nubile state,  
I had a horror, vent in yelpings,  
Of what were known as single helpings;  
When I was nine, or maybe ten,  
I nursed an unrequited yen:  
I loved her, middle-aged and shrewish,  
That she was Gentile, I but Jewish—  
Though now I marvel at it all,  
Who am devout Episcopal—  
When I was in my 'teens, I dreamed  
Green apples were not what they seemed,  
But beasts, inimical to rest,  
Who sat upon a fellow's chest;

When I achieved the peak of twenty,  
Bad breaks with dames I had aplenty,  
Who left my burning love behind,  
And each, a complex in my mind;—  
Now, to these inhibitions true,  
I am a-Freud of losing you,  
And, though I fully understand,  
I meditate your little hand,  
Your eyes that lie as like as not,  
And love you, whom I ought to swat.

#### IV

Lovely lady, who does so  
All my waking haunt,  
Tell me, tell me, do you know  
What the hell you want?

Lady, to whose feet I'd bring  
The world, if I could win it,  
Are you sure of anything  
For a single minute?

You whose eyes can kindle flame  
Only Death could smother,  
Tell me, please, does any dame  
Differ from another?

Was the apple applesauce  
Eve ate in the garden?  
Aren't you all a total loss?  
No? I beg your pardon!

## V

Oh, the first kiss is sweet—  
Like a bud, like a wafer;  
But the last, I repeat,  
But the last kiss is safer.

The first kiss is sweet  
With an innocent savor;  
But the last is like meat  
With some salt for its flavor.

Oh, with wonder I look—  
You so fair, so capricious!  
Say, whose goose did you cook  
For a meat so delicious?

## VI

Come, my sweet (or what you will)  
Let us drink our blasé fill;  
Let us give the night and day  
To love and neurasthen-i-ay.

Let our nerves and passions rage  
In the manner of the age,  
Dancing through erotic scenes  
To the jazzing endocrines.

You love me and I love you  
And a dozen others too;  
Let's exchange, with linkèd hopes,  
Our amorous kaleidoscopes.

While the Fords the land obscure,  
And radio makes the silence poor,  
Let us be exhibit **Z**  
In the new pathology.

## VII

Belovèd, let our love be quite  
Intense and splendid, but polite,  
That in the hour of parting, we  
May end the matter pleasantly.

Since the foredoomed farewell is core  
Of all the mortal evermore,  
Let us not mar with present fret  
The gracious sequel of regret.

Rather, my little love, let me  
Your guide for future lovers be,  
Whose pleasure now is sometimes fraught  
With envy of the men who taught.

## VIII

I cannot elude you, I cannot escape:  
You haunt me in every conceivable shape;—  
You're morning and midnight and twilight  
and noon,  
Orion, the Dipper, the Lion, the moon.

You keep me enchanted, exalted and true  
In snares of the fair and ubiquitous you;  
I don't mind your being the glories above—  
But here you intrude on the ladies I love!

## IX

I wish my mind would let me take  
You as you are for your own sake;  
A trifle less I might adore,  
But then, I should enjoy you more.

But Imagination will  
Change and transfigure you, until  
I never see you, but it seems  
Some glory of you stayed in dreams.

Sometimes I think the only thing  
That can the lasting rapture bring,  
Is not to see you, but to stay  
In love with you and far away.

This is the kind of distant bliss  
That Dante got from Beatrice:  
A woman singing in the trees  
A name, an epic, to the breeze.

And men and women all will prove  
This cruel arson against Love—  
That he burns all else away  
In the belovèd but the clay.

## X

Sweetling, try not to forget,  
Lest in trying, you remember;  
She who blows too hard may get  
Flame from the deceptive ember.

Let the attic of your mind  
Keep whatever stores are in it;  
Do not look too much behind,  
Lest you tread the present minute.

I shall pluck the moments now—  
Only folly weeps to miss one;  
Let some later lover's brow  
Wrinkle at the thought of this one!



## XI

The rain that falls upon my heart  
And on my eyes so wistfully,  
Will fall again; I shall not start,  
For it will drop so restfully

On eyes that will be pools of quiet,  
Upon a heart that will not stir  
At memories of ancient riot  
Within the rain's sad dulcimer.

Even as it falls upon the ground,  
Nor makes the tiniest pebble start,  
The rain will fall, nor make a sound  
Of anything within my heart—

Neither of the bitter nor the sweet  
Of loving you, my dear, my dear—  
Though all our moments it repeat,  
I, who have loved you, shall not hear.

I shall but stare upon my heaven  
Of silent earth and starless stone,  
Beyond which, grazing sheep at even  
Find peace no greater than my own.

And I, who love you now, my dear,  
So wildly that my heart is spent,  
Think of the time I shall not hear  
Your voice in rain, and am content.



## XII

I shall sing a song to you,—  
Fair a song as any;  
Perfect as a drop of dew—  
Rare among the many.

Eager, dancing words will do  
Their melodious duty;  
Make a lucent mirror, true  
To your shining beauty.

I shall coin your golden hair  
For a stanza's treasure;  
Tame your wild and wayward air  
To my love-sick measure.

I shall lift my song and sing  
With the voice of doom  
The utter loneliness you bring  
Into this little room.



PSALM



---

*Psalm*

---

High in His holy spires sits the Lord ;  
He is the bell, the clapper and the cord,  
And, taller than the haughty traffic towers,  
He sprinkles chimes on the congested hours ;  
Yet near in lovingkindness to the ground,  
He breaks the Sabbath—with His fruitful sound.

Benign and Undenominational,  
His benisons from myriad belfries fall :  
No special steeples His affections hold,  
And styles of architecture leave Him cold ;  
The stately Gothic in the city fogs,  
The shingle Baptist in the rural bogs,  
The tricky Moorish, surly Muscovite,  
Are equally His dwellings and delight.

With sweet democracy, He plays upon  
The simple bell, orchestral carillon,

That he who runs may listen, if not read,  
To clangor suited to his secret need,  
And know, in toil or wedlock, woe or fear,  
That God is ever present in his ear.

He is the bell, the clapper and the cord;  
The sacerdotal brokers on the board;  
The cost of maintenance, the preacher's hire,  
The congregation and agnostic choir;  
He is, in short, the works, the church entire,  
Electing thus, in stone and wood to stand,  
That we His love might readily command,  
Who else had power, amid divine acclaim,  
To call each cherub by her Christian name.

Oh, mighty abnegation, how you shame  
My simple sorrows even out of name!  
Who but the Lord such sacrifice could make—  
To dwell in bishops for his brother's sake?  
Who else desert the lovely seraphim,  
To be a hallelujah and a hymn,  
Or stand, for thankless mankind, year on year,  
High Church in London, neo-Jewish here?

Ring out, ring out, ye non-sectarian chimes!  
Inspire these pseudo-democratic times!  
From Coast to Coast (or even further) roll  
Your living Esperanto of the soul!—  
The Methodist, anticipating hell,  
Is saved from madness by a Baptist bell;

A complex caught in a Semitic brain  
A Presbyterian clapper cures again;  
And many a Christian Scientist's despair,  
When acidosis was still new to prayer,  
Was exorcised by brave St. Patrick's peal,  
The uric acid flying at its heel,  
Because the rival belfry had the grace  
Of therapy in his peculiar case.

Oh Lord, I cannot praise too loftily  
Your distribution of Divinity;  
Ubiquitous, accessible and free,  
Benevolent, beneficent and wise;  
Each church, Yourself, and of Yourself a guise,  
Yourself in all, and yet all different,  
To suit the varied need and temperament;—  
Sweet stations set along the path of strife,  
The via dolorosa of this life.  
The melancholy of insolvent days  
The Synagogue Emanu-el allays;  
And bright St. Thomas, flawless as a rose,  
Is my specific for domestic woes;  
St. John, that lifts a hummock to a hill,  
Whose dome the Lord expands Himself to fill,  
Distinctively and obviously divine,  
Protects my teeth above the danger line.  
And so the blessed catalogue goes on  
Through brick and stone and bell and carillon;  
The mystic and eternal ministry  
That suits each need and each calamity.

High in His holy spires sits the Lord;  
He is the bell, the clapper and the cord;  
The seventy-thousand aches and pains and needs;  
The twenty-thousand therapeutic creeds;  
The church, the book, the candles and the chimes;  
The Author of my reason and these rhymes.



**POEMS INTENDED TO INCITE THE  
UTMOST DEPRESSION**



---

*Poems Intended to Incite the Utmost  
Depression*

---

I

When love, at last, had left me quiet,  
And my heart was clear of pain,  
Toxins, due to faulty diet,  
Broke it right in two again.

Those who forge our fates above,  
Little heed the hurt they do—  
Now with toxins, now with love,  
They break our trusting hearts in two.

II

Cervantes, Dostoievsky, Poe,  
Drained the dregs and lees of woe;  
Gogol, Beethoven and Keats  
Got but meager share of sweets;

Milton, Homer, Dante, had  
Reason to be more than sad;  
Cæsar and Napoleon  
Saw the blood upon their sun;  
Martyr, hermit, saint and priest  
Lingered long at Sorrow's feast:  
Paid with pyre and perishing  
For every feather in each wing;—  
Well, if such as these could be  
So foredoomed to misery,  
And Fate despise her own elect—  
What the deuce do *you* expect?

### III

You have dreamed, enduring sorrow,  
Of a time yclept tomorrow,  
When, your share of trouble spent,  
You would flower in content,  
Trust your woman, sleep till noon,  
Keep your teeth and grab the moon:—  
Well, tomorrows came your way  
And behaved just like today;  
Came in droves and caravans  
And thumbed their bugles at your plans.  
Yet you have the nerve to say,  
“Tomorrow is another day,”  
And stake your heart upon a boon  
From some tomorrow, surnamed Soon.

Incorrigible boob, I hate  
Like poison to vaticinate,  
But you, who'll never learn a thing,  
Listen to the song I sing:  
Ere the last tomorrow's gone,  
You'll slice moons in Matteawan.

#### IV

In a million years or so,  
Maybe yes and maybe no,  
Maybe sooner, like as not,  
Sun and stars will go to pot.  
They will leave behind no spark:  
Earth will curdle in the dark;  
Men like women will become,  
Adding to their dreadful sum;  
A. E. Housman will come back  
And take an even gloomier tack.  
Nothing I could say or think,  
Or fancy, or project in ink,  
Would even by one-tenth convey  
The horrors of that monstrous day.  
And 'tis for this you toil and sweat;  
And 'tis for this you moil and fret;  
And 'tis for this that men must weep  
While women work them while they sleep!  
Of course, you say, "A lot I care:—  
My heart is weak, I won't be there;

When that time comes, I'll be about  
As dead as love the third week out."  
Blind oaf, enjoy your vain delight:—  
They'll resurrect you just for spite;  
They'll haul you from your dreamless bed  
To drop a comet on your head.  
And 'tis for this you toil and sweat  
And moil, et cetera, et cet.,  
And wonder if some feeble dame  
Still loves her zany, just the same.  
Oh, greatest ape that ever was,  
I hope she does, I hope she does!

POEMS IN PRAISE OF PRACTICALLY  
NOTHING





---

## *Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing*

---

### I

You buy some flowers for your table;  
You tend them tenderly as you're able;  
You fetch them water from hither and thither—  
What thanks do you get for it all? They wither.

### II

Only the wholesomest foods you eat;  
You lave and you lave from your head to your feet;  
The earth is not steadier on its axis  
Than you in the matter of prophylaxis;  
You go to bed early and early you rise;  
You scrub your teeth and you scour your eyes—  
What thanks do you get for it all? Nephritis,  
Pyorrhea, appendicitis,  
Renal calculus and gastritis.

### III

You buy yourself a new suit of clothes ;  
The care you give it, God only knows ;  
The material, of course, is the very *best* yet ;  
You get it pressed and pressed and *pressed* yet ;  
You keep it free from specks *so* tiny—  
What thanks do you get? The pants get shiny.

### IV

You practice every possible virtue ;  
You hurt not a soul, while others hurtue ;  
You fetch and carry like a market basket—  
What thanks do you get for it? Me don't ask it!

### V

You leap out of bed ; you start to get ready ;  
You dress and you dress till you feel unsteady ;  
Hours go by, and still you're busy  
Putting on clothes, till your brain is dizzy.  
Do you flinch? Do you quit? Do you go out  
naked?—  
The least little button, you don't forsake it.  
What thanks do you get? Well, for all this mess, yet  
When night comes around, you've got to undress yet.

## VI

You're kind to women, children, worms;  
You speak of God in the highest terms;  
You help spell words like "tetrahedral";  
You show respect for a cathedral;  
You're sweet and gentle as a mouse is:  
(Wives should behave so to their spouses!)  
Though women tempt you, more than plenty,  
Your rate is half a girl in twenty;—  
In short, from grace you never fell yet—  
And what do you get? On all sides hell yet!

## VII

Your life's a wreck; you're tired of living,  
Of lending, spending, borrowing, giving;  
Of doubt and fear, of hope and question,  
Of women, children and digestion;  
There isn't a single dream you cherish—  
You simply pine and pray to perish.  
You haven't the nerve to take bichloride,  
But you stay up nights till you're gaunt and sore  
    eyed;  
You don't eat greens, as the doctors tell you,  
And you drink the very worst they sell you;  
You've earned, at least, let's say, cirrhosis—  
And what do you get for it? Halitosis!

## VIII

You take a bath, and sit there bathing  
In water cold, in water scathing;  
You scrub till you're *sans* an epidermis,  
And feel like a regular bathing Hermes.  
You do not waste a single minute;  
The tub shows how you worked while in it;  
You dry, and do some honest rooting  
For such remarkable abluting:—  
Well, a day goes by, or ten, or thirty,  
And what thanks do you get? You're just as dirty!

## IX

You meet a girl and you surrender;  
Though God knows why, you're kind and tender;  
You're husband, lover, sister, brother,  
Companion, banker, father, mother;  
You try your best to be worthy of her;  
You make mistakes, but she knows you love her;  
You're hers completely, and you show it:  
And what thanks do you get? The gate—I know it!

## X

You're a good girl; you're gray with virtue;  
The very thought of a misstep hurts you;  
You know that honor must be hoarded  
Against the day when it is rewarded;

You see a girl who's all men's vassal,  
Marry a duke in his own castle;  
You see another, who can't say, "No, sir,"  
Capture, at least, a wholesale grocer;—  
But you never let your thoughts grow sordid:  
You know in your heart you'll be rewarded.  
Well, the years go by, like queens and roses,  
The way they did in the time of Moses,  
And what do you get? False teeth, a doorman,  
A complex, or assistant foreman!

## XI

You hire a cook, but she can't cook yet;  
You teach her by candle, bell, and book yet;  
You show her, as if she were in her cradle,  
Today, the soup, tomorrow, a ladle.  
Well, she doesn't learn, so although you need her,  
You decide that somebody else should feed her:—  
But you're kind by birth; you hate to fire her;  
To tell a woman you don't require her—  
So you wait and wait, and before you do it,  
What thanks do you get? She beats you to it!

## XII

You're a pure spirit; you're air and water;  
You're nobody's son and nobody's daughter;



In short, you're still in the state pre-natal—  
A strange condition, but seldom fatal—  
Well, anyhow, you're a harmless atom,  
Content to stay in your own stratum;  
You do not drink or play the horses,  
Or interfere with natural forces,  
Indulge in moods or whims erratic,  
Which cause the flu, and sometimes, static:—  
A perfect type of the homo *non est*,  
You're unobtrusive, kind and honest,  
As upright as an ear of corn—  
And what thanks do you get for it all? You're  
born!

### XIII

You're a positive fiend for life extension:  
You eat greens in every dimension;  
You know as well as any parrot  
The quirks of calory and carrot—  
They've taken out, without a quiver,  
Your tonsils, teeth, ambition, liver,  
Appendix, income—every center  
Designed to let bacilli enter.  
You never miss the daily dozen  
That killed your uncle, brother, cousin;  
You breathe only the freshest breezes—  
And what do you get? The same diseases.

## XIV

You work and work, and keep on working,  
While poets, even worse, are shirking;  
Your hair falls out, your eyes grow bleary,  
Your bones grow old, your outlook dreary;  
But you never seek to break the fetters—  
You go on filing useless letters.  
Well, a day arrives, and it must be spring yet;  
The birds, somehow, begin to sing yet;  
The grass is green, the cows are mooing,  
The flies are buzzing, the people shooing,  
The air is fresh—it makes you tipsy—  
And, all of a sudden, you turn gipsy.  
So you come in late, you go home early;  
The thought of the office makes you surly;  
You come in later, you go home earlier;  
The thought of the office makes you surlier;  
You've worked enough; you've earned the leisure  
To have some poor, but honest pleasure;  
No desk, you think, should rise and quell you—  
And what do you get? Do I have to tell you?

## XV

You go to high school, even college;  
You become a regular Book of Knowledge;  
You learn that Nero played the fiddle;  
That the Sphinx is, after all, a riddle;

That women weep while men go faring;  
That Bismarck seldom was a herring.  
No matter what a person asks you,  
The brilliant answer never tasks you;  
You smile and say, "Go ask another,"  
Like, "Did the Gracchi have a mother?"  
Well, you meet a girl, and nothing sweeter;  
The kind—well, anyhow, you meet 'er—  
You look her over with elation—  
She seems to have a cerebation:  
So you start right in, like Kipling's thunder,  
To be the twenty-seventh wonder;  
You spout such high and fancy learning,  
You're sure the girl will die of yearning—  
And when you're finished, did you please her?  
Did you hear her say, "You're Julius Cæsar"?  
What thanks did you get? The usual solo:  
She likes the Prince of Wales and polo.

## XVI

You're born (whose fault is it?) a poet—  
Nobody sees it, but you know it;  
You try to temper your psychoses  
And get, at least, Grade B neuroses;  
But it's no use—so great the curse is,  
You go from bad to worse, then verses.  
But suppose you wrote a poem a minute,  
What menace, after all, is in it?



You might have been a chiropractor,  
Dentist, diplomat, or actor,  
Banker, lawyer, politician,  
Or, let us say, your own physician,  
Attacked the world, and brought upon it  
More harm than even a first-rate sonnet—  
Here is your chance, but you eschew it;  
You haven't quite the heart to do it—  
And what thanks do you get for it? Don't I know  
it?—  
You go on being a sap and poet.



**NOTES FOR A SUPERFLUOUS POEM**



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*Notes for a Superfluous Poem*

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We chose with care and dined with zest,  
A simple fare by genius dressed,  
Then home by glittering stars we walked,  
And looked on heaven, and gaily talked,  
And dreamed a morrow fair as fair,  
And drank the bootleg autumn air.  
We loved the town for all its bright  
Adornment of the naked night,  
Its orchid rarities of light.  
We loved the town and all its horde,  
Whom God has socked but never floored,  
And (woe to us!) we loved the Lord.

Then home, and while the night relaxed,  
And noises waned, and silence waxed,  
We scored against our foes above  
That brief perfection which is love.

We took the autumn in and made  
A fire for him, and thoughtful shade,  
And comfortable at his knees,  
We listened to his odysseys,  
Until he dropped his misty head,  
Was silent. Then we went to bed.

Ah, sequel terrible to tell!  
Ah, dreadful sequel that befell!—  
Scarce had I tasted slumber's cup,  
And scarce prepared on dreams to sup—  
An awful nightmare ripped me up!  
A nightmare fit for Sisyphus  
Leaped up from sizzling Tartarus  
And seized me in his brutish paws,  
And bit me with his Stygian jaws,  
And made a shard, a shred, a patch,  
A rag, a wreck, a weed, a thatch,  
A heap of dust, a scrap, a bit,  
Of all the joys preceding it.

Ah, foe (I quote Millay) and friend,  
The moral of this tale attend—  
No matter what the Lord may send,  
Nightmare gets us in the end.

A GARDEN OF VERSES FOR THE LITTLE  
ONES, INCLUDING ORPHANS AND STEP-  
CHILDREN, AND THEIR PARENTS AND  
GUARDIANS ALSO





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*A Garden of Verses for the Little Ones,  
Including Orphans and Step-children, and  
Their Parents and Guardians Also*

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I

*Primer*

The camel has a funny hump—

Well, what of it?

The desert is an awful dump—

Well, what of it?

The sun it rises every day—

What about it?

Roosters crow and asses bray—

What about it?

The stars shine nearly every night—

Don't bother me with it!

Grass is green and snow is white—

Get out o' here!

## II

### *Yes, Dear*

God gave us the blue sky above,  
And I'll forgive Him that.  
He made your mother, marriage, love,  
And I'll forgive Him that.  
God made the grass, the trees, the dew,  
And I'll forgive Him that.  
He also made such boobs as you,  
And that's where He loses out with me!

## III

### *Lullaby*

Yes, I'll take you to the zoo  
To see the yak, the bear, the gnu,  
And that's the place where I'll leave you—  
Sleep, little baby!

You'll see the lion in a rage,  
The rhino, none the worse for age;  
You'll see the inside of a cage,—  
Sleep, little baby!

## IV

### *The Pansy*

The pansy makes such weird grimaces,  
And imitates all bestial faces—  
But there's a thing it couldn't do,  
And that is, make a face like you.  
I'm sure I've never seen another,  
And that you got it from your mother.

## V

### *Lullaby*

Hush, my darling, that infernal  
Racket; dearest, do!  
Mamma is not all maternal—  
She's a woman too.  
Papa may of mamma tire;  
He's been wed too long;  
But the others who admire  
Cannot all be wrong.  
Sleep! Sleep!

Men must work, and so they should, dear,  
Lest their women weep;  
Drawing water, hewing wood, dear,  
Helps them go to sleep.

But your mamma sleeps in daytime,  
When the sparrows twit,  
And when night is here, her playtime,  
Mamma wants to flit.

Sleep! Sleep!

Now I hear the jazzu calling,  
Calling to its own—  
And if you don't stop your bawling,  
You will bawl alone.  
Yes, my lambkin, I adore you;  
Mamma's kind and true;  
But never think because I bore you,  
You can bore me too!

Sleep! Sleep!

## VI

### *The Tree*

See the leaves upon the tree!  
That is where they ought to be:  
Whether they be foul or fair,  
Papa did not put them there.

## VII

### *The Doll*

Here is the little doll I brought you—  
It shows the kind of simp I thought you!

## VIII

### *The Bird*

I love to hear the little bird  
Into song by morning stirred,  
Provided that he doesn't sing  
Before my own awakening.  
A bird that wakes a fellow up,  
Should have been a buttercup.

## IX

### *A Father's Heart is Touched*

When I think of all you've got  
Coming to you, little tot:  
The disappointments and diseases,  
The rosebud hopes that blow to cheeses,  
The pains, the aches, the blows, the kicks,  
The jobs, the women, and the bricks,  
I'm almost glad to see you such  
An idiot, they won't hurt you much.

## X

### *Lullaby*

Sleep, my little baby, sleep;  
You'll have cause enough to weep—  
Slumber is a precious boon;  
You'll be getting measles soon;

Mumps will claim you for their own;  
Croup will change your infant tone.  
Sleep, my little darling, sleep,  
Ere your first bicuspid peep  
Through your rosy little gums,  
And the envious colic comes.  
Oh, the troubles Time will ladle  
On your happy baby cradle  
Very shortly from the deep!—  
So, be wise, my lamb, and sleep.

## XI

### *Zoology*

The elephant's a ghastly beast  
That haunts the countries of the East;  
The hippopotamus, I think,  
Never gets enough to drink;  
At any rate, I hear the dub  
Never leaves his muddy tub;  
The eagle dwells upon the steep  
And feeds on savages and sheep—  
What's the good of having that  
Awful rot beneath your hat?

## XII

### *To a Chubby Little Girl, Aged Three*

The jungle is a kind of grove  
Where lions, apes and rajahs rove;  
It's not the kind of place that I  
Should choose to live in, or to die;  
Yet I should just as soon be in it  
As hear you blab another minute.

## XIII

### *The Wind in the Tree*

When the wind is in the tree,  
It makes a noise just like the sea,  
As if there were not noise enough  
To bother one, without that stuff.

## XIV

### *The Calf, the Goat, the Little Lamb*

The calf, the goat, the little lamb,  
How easy is their day!  
They do not seem to give-a-damn  
For anything but play.



Each hour its simple pleasure brings,  
And not a thing to do,  
And yet, like other living things,  
They end up in a stew!  
And so did I, my little lamb,  
*And so will you.*

## XV

### *The Gnu*

The gnu is a remarka-bul,  
From all descriptions, ani-mul;  
Yet how remarka-bul must you  
Appear to the eccentric gnu!—  
I have no doubt that even I  
Must puzzle his peculiar eye;  
There's something wrong with all of us;—  
Let's ask the hippopotamus.

## XVI

### *Papa Sings (And How!)*

The moon is made of Stilton cheese;  
Polar bears can never freeze;  
In summer there are lots of flies;  
Pumpkins end in pumpkin pies;



Rivers flow into the sea;  
You don't look a bit like me;  
When it's winter, then it snows,—  
Scoot! You've got your mother's nose!  
Germans drink a lot of beer—  
Now, you pest, get out o' here!

## XVII

### *Mamma Sings*

Go to sleep, my little oaf,  
Mamma's darling sugar-loaf;  
Go to sleep and stay that way  
For at least a night and day;  
I'm no angel up above—  
Don't abuse my mother-love;  
I can stand so much and then  
Mamma wants maturer men.  
Sleep, my little plague, sleep tight;  
My complexes are bad tonight,  
And 'papa's friend is waiting now  
To add a horn to papa's brow—  
So sleep, my onus, sleep my own,  
For if you bawl, you bawl alone.

## XVIII

### *For Drum and Harmonica*

Sleep, my darling baby, sleep:  
The French eat frogs; Australians, sheep.

Today will go, tomorrow come;  
I'll bake a cake and give you some.

Angels through your slumber sing!  
A kangaroo's a funny thing.

A kangaroo will make you laff,  
But not so much as a giraffe—

Not so much as a giraffe;  
I'll bake a cake and give you haff—

A chocolate cake and a gooseberry tart;  
Sleep, my darling; have a heart!

Don't you worry; ma will keep—  
You yelled all day and now you sleep!

## XIX

### *For Little Boys Destined for Big Business*

Sleep, my baby, little elf;  
Grow up honest—with yourself!  
Always unto others do  
What they'd like to do to you.

Love your neighbor—he may be  
Useful; and besides it's free;

But should he more than friendship seek,  
Always turn the other cheek.

Help the needy—all that's lent  
Brings from six to ten per cent;  
Place your trust in Heaven, but keep  
Your money working while you sleep.

Loyal be to loyal friends;  
Make them pay you dividends;  
Work, like the industrious bee,  
Your friends and foes impartially.

While the tender conscience frets,  
All things come to him who gets;  
All that glitters will for gold  
Glitter more a thousand-fold.

Plutocratic precious, sleep:  
Finer feelings all will keep;  
Easy lies the head that wears  
A crown among both bulls and bears.

## XX

### *For Little Boys in General*

Hush, my darling; do not cry—  
You'll have cause to, by and by;  
Blonde or Titian or brunette,  
Some of them will get you yet.

You'll grow up and then you'll fall—  
You'll have reason then to bawl;  
You'll be glad to get some sleep,  
For men must work, or women weep.

Men must work, while women try  
To want the things they have to buy,  
And while they try so hard to want,  
Men must labor and grow gaunt.

When I look at baby's brow,  
How I hate the hussies now!  
Mamma'd save you if she could—  
Sleep now, while the sleeping's good!

## XXI

### *For Little Girls Only*

Rock-a-bye, baby; why do you smile?  
Are you rehearsing how to beguile?  
We'll mould your expression just the right way:  
Your natural look is a bit too blasé.

Mamma will tuck her little one in;  
Sleep now, my darling, it's good for the skin;  
And skin is important, for soon comes the day  
When baby commences her skin game to play.

Mamma will help you, mamma advise,  
Take the hard look away from your eyes;  
Mamma will tell her lamb what to do,  
Then Ziegfeld will come and glorify you.



PANACEA





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## *Panacea*

---

I chant the homely bard who sings  
The solace of insentient things;  
Who lays upon his gall and grief  
Balsamic bush and unguent leaf;  
Who slips his humors to the hill,  
His dolours to the daffodil.  
I've taken many a desperate chance  
With seventy kinds of shrubs and plants;  
Consigned my toothache to the trees,  
My heartbreak to the Pleiades.  
The red and therapeutic rose  
Has healed me of corrosive woes,  
And much I owe of health and ease  
To blooming beets and peonies.  
When trouble smote me, zip and thigh,  
I've winked at the narcotic sky;  
I've taken creditors to stare  
Upon the liquidating air,

And soothed the bloodhounds in their breast  
With, "See the sun sink in the West!"  
I've clipped misfortune's panther paw  
With natural phenomena,  
And poulticed worry and disease  
With Christian Science cabbages.  
Oh, let the years their sorrows yield—  
The brook is gurgling through the field;  
The high and homœopathic stars  
Will heal my wounds and leave no scars;  
The rainbow hurdle miles and miles  
Of zooming Fords and cloudy stiles,  
To lay upon my fear and fret  
Her cool and glowing amulet,  
While panaceas straight from God  
Leap up in lilies from the sod.

Oh, hail, the homely bard who sings  
The solace of insentient things:  
The sky, the sea, the air, the ground,  
Where perfect lenitives abound!

SONGS ABOUT LIFE AND BRIGHTER THINGS  
YET; A SURVEY OF THE ENTIRE EARTHLY  
PANORAMA, ANIMAL, VEGETABLE AND MIN-  
ERAL, WITH APPROPRIATE COMMENT BY  
THE AUTHOR, OF A PHILOSOPHIC, WHIMSI-  
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TRULY REMARKABLE UNDERTAKING



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*Songs About Life and Brighter Things Yet;  
A Survey of the Entire Earthly Panorama,  
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riate Comment by the Author, of a Philo-  
sophic, Whimsical, Humorous or Poetic  
Nature—a Truly Remarkable Undertaking*

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I

Nothing from a straight line swerves  
So sharply as a woman's curves,  
And, having swerved, no might or main  
Can ever put her straight again.

II

Men in single state should tarry;  
While women, I suggest, should marry.

### III

Some folks I know are always worried,  
That when they die, they will be buried;  
And some I know are quite elated  
Because they're going to be cremated.

### IV

Oh, it is cruel and inhuman  
Not to pick up a fallen woman!—  
The man who will not pick her up,  
Shall have but water in his cup.

### V

Where primal instincts do not slumber,  
One sex the other does outnumber:  
Men, e.g., are scarce in Paris—  
The cause of which, *on dit*, the war is—  
And the status that prevails  
In London is a dearth of males;  
While twenty fellows in Manhattan  
Jump for the chair that Jenny sat in,  
'Tis bad, I think to have too many  
Women around a man—if any.

## VI

A queen as torrid as Sumatra  
Was the famous Cleopatra,  
While Queen Elizabeth, I gather,  
Contained herself in hottest weather:—  
Proving that even queens can vary,  
(And how!) like simple Madge or Mary;—  
Yet spell them with an a or e,  
They look a lot alike to me.

## VII

It must be terrible to be  
The kind of man they call a “he”;  
A man who’d rather fight than eat,  
And doesn’t have to cook his meat;  
To whom a million women cling;  
Who’s not afraid of anything;  
Who aims with an unerring eye  
When circumstances justify;  
Whose breadth and brawn and strength  
and size  
Demand continual exercise;  
Who rises every day at five  
And feels it’s good to be alive;  
Who burns up leagues of windy plains  
While weaklings wilt in subway trains.



Personally, I prefer  
To be a guy who hates to stir;  
Who stares with moist, suspicious brow  
For signs of malice in a cow;  
Who couldn't climb upon a horse  
With pulleys, ladder, threats or force;  
Who hasn't brains enough to care  
About the foulness of the air,  
And doesn't know that oxygen  
Is breathed by all red-blooded men  
The wide world over, east and west,  
And sprouts in hair upon the chest;—  
A fish, who lets his vigor lapse,  
In dusty towns, where men are saps;  
Who every manly art abhors,  
And moulders in the Great Indoors.

Although a man like that disgraces  
His brothers of the Open Spaces;  
Although his chest is bald and flat,  
There's something underneath the hat  
Of such a man—a kind of demon  
That lets him boss ten thousand he-men,  
Who gallop grandly o'er the plains  
And bring him home their hard-earned gains;  
And though he's anything but strong,  
He lives as healthy twice as long.



## VIII

I'd rather listen to a flute  
In Gotham, than a band in Butte.

## IX

The serpent has no feet or hands,  
Yet makes his way in many lands;  
But who would on his belly crawl  
In order to avoid a fall?

## X

The leopard cannot change his spots:  
In short, they're his forget-me-nots.

## XI

Sometimes, in the dead of night,  
Beyond the tiger-yellow light,  
I hear the silence; then I see  
It sprawling cat-wise comfortably,  
With high back arched against the skies,  
And starry languor in its eyes,  
Transparent in transparent air,  
Yet darkly outlined to my stare.

Then it occurs to me if that  
Content and immemorial cat  
Moved its ubiquitous, soft paws,  
And opened those impalpable jaws  
And spoke—what revelation then  
Would flash and thunder upon men;  
What light apocalyptic would  
Shine from the eyes of evil and good;  
What speech articulate would fall  
From stars in the air's confessional;  
What secrets joy and woe would sing,  
And the stone mouth of Everything!

Then it occurs to me, as now,  
That all that cats can say is "*Meow!*"

## XII

Stars reflected in the water  
Are jewels enough for Pharaoh's daughter;  
But Pharaoh's daughter's dead and gone  
While living girls are getting on.

## XIII

The oyster never leaves his shell,  
And does, therein, exceeding well;

He does not have to sweat and brood  
To know the joys of oysterhood;  
He deems the treasured pearl a fault,  
And takes his world with ample salt.

#### XIV

From coast to coast the railroads roam,  
Yet every inch of rail stays home.

#### XV

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
But stay, my darling, where you are;  
Into my life if you should fall,  
I'd never see you shine at all.

#### XVI

There's no one that I'd like to be  
One half so much as I or me,  
And though I sup on meager bran,  
I'd change the menu, not the man.

#### XVII

They say a rolling stone's a loss:  
And yet I see no use in moss;  
I'd rather gypsy through Cockaigne  
Than vegetate a dubious gain.

## XVIII

There are strange creatures in the zoo,  
Like emu, zebra, auk and gnu,  
But stranger creatures have I seen  
Riding in a limousine.

## XIX

It drinks up all—and yet the sea  
Exceeds not its capacity;  
Alas, how much a man must fret  
To keep himself as strong—and wet!

## XX

Blossoms in a May-day breeze  
Are like lovely promises;  
They delicately seem to say  
That every bud will have its day,  
Will blossom, ripen and be fruit,  
And very often, canned, to boot!

## XXI

The church, for all its Heavenly birth,  
Can never leave the lowly earth,  
While I, of more profane extraction,  
May walk myself into a fraction;

May scale the air, the sky explore,  
And knock at Heaven's very door;  
Which shows that I have more a mind  
For Heaven, than any church you'll find,  
And that the spire, which Heavenward points,  
Is still with Heaven out of joints.

## XXII

I do respect that noble man  
Who, when he's full of trouble can  
Preserve a bright and cheerful mien  
As if his life were all serene;  
But I prefer the fellow, who  
Is lively as a kangaroo  
And beams and shouts with pure delight  
When everything is going right.

## XXIII

The ostrich lives in foreign lands  
And trots along the burning sands,  
And when from foes it would escape,  
It hides its head—the silly ape!

## XXIV

There's nothing sweeter than a bride  
If you're not standing by her side;  
But if you are, I learned in books,  
You'll never see how sweet she looks.

## XXV

The rose is so improvident  
It never saves a single scent,  
Without which fault, you must agree,  
The rose would smell like you or me:—  
Alas, that vices often are  
The virtues of a flower or star,  
Which paints the night upon the deep,  
While men and swine are fast asleep.

## XXVI

There's nothing that I have to say,  
You haven't heard a duller day.

## XXVII

The camel has a hump, but he  
Looks just as curiously at me.

## XXVIII

The tailor sews and gets the pip;  
The tailor sews while others rip.

## XXIX

The parrot does the best he can  
To imitate the talk of Man,  
But since he has no gift for speech,  
The best the bird can do is screech.

## XXX

See the serpent in the grass!  
Stand aside, there; let him pass!  
Oh, how happy he could be  
With the smallest leg-acy!

## XXXI

The dinosaur and ichthyosaur  
Are not among the things that are,  
Though once the beasts were features;  
Ah, sad it is to contemplate  
How Nature can eliminate  
Unnecessary creatures!



Perhaps she will, at last, extend  
The process to another end—  
To man, and even woman,  
And turn the final hose of Fate  
And give the biologic gate  
To the obnoxious human!

### XXXII

How doth the busy little bee  
Improve each shining hour? Well, how?  
The shining hour, it seems to me,  
Still wears no honey on its brow,  
Nor is, for all that I can see,  
Improved by man or beast or bee.

### XXXIII

The apple grows so bright and high,  
And ends its days in apple pie.

### XXXIV

When I was young, my hopes ran high—  
My hopes did run, and so could I;  
They danced upon the mountain tops  
Oblivious of the traffic cops;



They swung, like monkeys in the trees,  
From sun and moon and Pleiades;  
They frolicked on the farthest wave  
And thumbed their noses at the grave;  
They thumbed their haughty bugles long  
At men and creeds and right and wrong,  
And gave the tin-horn days to come  
Their only sound of fife and drum:—  
Well, now my thyroid youth is done,  
I'm very glad my *hopes* had fun!

### XXXV

The ant, he lays aside some dough  
Against the time of cold and snow;  
He doesn't trust a bit to luck,  
But gathers his assorted truck:—  
If I could live just like the ant  
I'd be as thrifty—but I can't.

### XXXVI

The monkey chatters in the tree  
Without a point, incessantly,  
And thence bequeaths to Man his looks,  
His conversation and his books.

### XXXVII

The pansy is so slight a flower,  
You'd think it could but live an hour—  
So fragile is its grace;  
And yet the little thing can dare  
The lion's countenance to wear  
Upon its pretty face.

How often does the meanest thing  
Bestrut its fancy like a king  
And walk a royal way!  
For every wolf in sheep's attire,  
A hundred thousand sheep aspire  
To stalk the helpless prey.

### XXXVIII

Content with things in miniature,  
The humblest gold-fish is not poor;  
His small aquarium is quite  
Sufficient for his small delight;  
He does not crave the flowing stream,  
Or of the mighty ocean dream,  
But with a little weed and gravel  
Will simulate extensive travel.  
A crystal dungeon cannot fret  
Or chafe his spirit—if it's wet;

But he, with aqueous content,  
Makes bright his mean environment:—  
Glass walls do not a prison make  
For fish who find a bowl a lake;  
Who can, factitious weed beyond,  
Behold the margin of a pond.

### XXXIX

The farmer walks behind the plow  
Which mops the ground as he his brow;  
The sun, it broils the wretched man  
Until the loam is not more tan;  
The very horses seem to talk  
About him, as before they walk,  
Treading with ease their crumbly courses  
And quite contented to be horses.  
I know that I should rather be  
A horse or cow or goat than he,  
Which feed upon a natural hoard  
Nor sweat and strain to keep a Ford.  
A horse is placid, strong and clean,  
It reads no Farmer's Magazine;  
A barren stall, a simple oat  
Are more important than its vote.  
If I were on that hillside now  
And that man's sweat were on my brow,

I'd fire a bullet at the sky,  
Trample the lettuce down and die;  
Or on a stream of salt self-pity  
Float jocundly into the city,  
Where, in the arms of that bright charmer,  
I'd sing loud pæans to the farmer.

## XL

Behold the graceful robin brood  
On grass, in thoughtful solitude,  
As if he meditated on  
God's ways to robins, pro and con.  
It seems that he must surely find  
The seed of truth beneath the rind;  
And yet I know the robin is  
As stupid as his homely phiz,  
And could no more evolve a thought  
Than I, by whom this song was wrought.

## XLI

The riveters across the street,  
Like giant locusts in the heat,  
With more than mortal malice rise  
To hunt the Lion in the skies.  
I know that all men try to shirk  
A moiety of honest work,

Are liable to loaf or quit  
Or oversleep or have a fit.  
But riveters, before the night  
Has packed its fardels for a flight,  
Stand jocund on the girders red,  
Like morning on the mountain's head.  
If I but knew them, I should sing  
The cryptic joys of riveting,  
That calls its devotees from sleep  
As prompt as tides upon the deep.  
Meantime, in midst of all their ruction,  
I hope they topple to destruction.

## XLII

Now the mountain top is won,  
Behold the valley in the sun—  
The gold and yellow farms that lie  
Bare-bosomed to the courting sky;  
The olive hills, the meadows green,  
The towns that punctuate the scene;  
The little spires that seem to cry  
For leaves and blossoms to the sky,  
So delicate, it seems the breeze  
Must stir them like the willow trees.  
Ah, happy vale, how sweet you are,  
As I observe you from this car;  
How pleasant here to sit and shirk  
And know your dwellers are at work!



### XLIII

The miner wears a hob-nailed boot;  
His clothes and face are black as soot;  
He is a most fantastic sight  
Among the lilacs fresh and bright

### XLIV

A lot of good it does a guy  
To know that June is in the sky;  
That in the fields the happy kine  
On grass and clover amply dine;  
That laurel on the mountain grows,  
And bees are feeding on the rose.  
I am no cow and cannot eat  
Grass and clover 'stead of meat;  
I couldn't chew a rose if I  
Were threatened by the Wrath on High.  
There's nothing I can get with honey—  
I'm not a bee; I need the money,  
And this bright office where I earn it,  
What rose or laurel wouldn't spurn it?  
I must admit, a blessed boon  
To me is this same month of June.

## XLV

I have only a bicycle,  
And you have a motor car;  
But your wife's a regular icicle  
And as blue as the bluest star.

I have only a room and a bath  
And you have a swell chateau;  
But you're a case for a psychopath  
And an allopath or so.

I have only one suit, in sooth,  
And you have a couple of score;  
But you have only a part of a tooth  
Where a whole tooth grew before.

I have little of skittles and gin  
And you have scuttles of wine;  
But your troubles from women to insulin  
Are nothing compared to mine.

## XLVI

Tomorrow comes, tomorrow goes;  
The thorn intrudes upon the rose;  
The bee improves the shining hour  
By robbing the defenseless flower,  
Affording Man a Heaven-sent  
And holy, natural precedent;

The river cannot flow uphill,  
And Jack, (he thinks) must have his Jill:—  
So varied is the dazzling store,  
As times goes on, of human lore,  
Though men invent and dig and sweat,  
Discover algebra and fret,  
Embroider heaven with their hopes,  
And stare at bugs through microscopes.  
Our sum of truth poor Lilith reckoned,  
When Adam stole to Eve, his second.

### XLVII

Though Cæsar stop a bunghole now,  
With no green myrtle on his brow,  
Remember, ere you shake your head  
So wisely, that friend Cæsar's dead.  
He does not stop, with mind and shin  
And heart and occiput and chin,  
The kicks and cuffs the fates bestow  
On all who linger here below.  
I'm sure, his dust he would not barter  
For any living bunghole-starter.

### XLVIII

I seldom mean a single thing  
I say, or (as the phrase goes) sing;  
But if it sounds both bright and true,  
I like to think I think I do.



## XLIX

If winter comes, with snow and sleet,  
And a minimum of heat,  
Spring can be so far behind  
That I chase it from my mind.

## L

Hope that springs eternal in  
The human breast, is fond of gin,  
Or Scotch or beer or anything  
Designed to help a hope to spring.

## LI

The dawn, it is a lovely sight,  
So tender-blue and timid white;  
A flower upon the eastern steep,  
That blossoms while I soundly sleep.  
I am afraid to stir or wake,  
Lest, with the shock, the dawn should break,  
And so, I sleep through many an hour,  
Rather than hurt so frail a flower.

## LII

I like the country very much:  
The trees, the grass, the birds and such;

The crickets chirping in the dark;  
The glow-worms with their sudden spark;  
I like the sturdy hills that rise  
In gracious worship of the skies;  
The grove, the field, the church-like wood,  
The sweet, adventurous solitude.  
I like to watch the cattle graze  
Silent in the sunny days:  
The cows, that waking seem to sleep;  
The woolly and untroubled sheep,  
So simple and so unaware  
They seem to blend into the air.  
And yet I should be quite cast down  
To see the country come to town.  
I like the country best for this;—  
Because they put it where it is.

### LIII

Of all the birds that sing and fly  
Between the housetops and the sky,  
The muddy sparrow, mean and small,  
I like, by far, the best of all.

His lot approaches human life;  
His days are full of fear and strife;  
He takes the traffic as it comes,  
And pounds the sullen pave for crumbs.

No bird has so unsure a span;  
He fights the elements and Man;  
And so harassed is all his day,  
He has no time to sing or pray.

From tenement to tenement  
He flees, too frail to get the rent,  
And then, his checkered days to crown,  
A checkered taxi runs him down.



**SONGS FOR AN OLD-FASHIONED LUTE**



---

*Songs for an Old-Fashioned Lute*

---

I

I've certainly learned a lot ;  
I've clarified many confusions ;  
I know when it's cold or it's hot,  
And facts, as distinct from illusions.

I'm properly cynical, too ;  
Sophisticate, thoroughly urban ;  
I know what to say and to do,  
And what to keep under the turban.

I've listened to Clara and Jane  
In many informative sessions,  
And I'll never be troubled again  
With trifles like dreams and suppressions.

I've a swanky contempt for the sticks,  
From Calgary down to the Isthmus,

And I laugh when I think of the hicks  
Who really believe there is Christmas.

I'm up on the masochist set;  
I'm at home with the ultra-sadistic;  
I've registered extrovert sweat  
Keeping pace with the introvert mystic.

I'm as doggy as Vanity Fair  
In matters of art and of breeding;  
I know what the invert will wear,  
And the seventeen sexes are reading.

I live, as the saying is, hard;  
I'm a stickler for freedom in books,  
For women who travel Cunard,  
And cuckolds who take it *de luxe*.

I'm quite *en rapport* with the time;  
I'm thoroughly up to the minute;  
And—wait till I finish this rhyme—  
A hell of a lot there is in it!

## II

I cannot reside in New York;  
The backwoods have won me completely,  
Where the boys believe in the stork,  
And the girls are silent discreetly.



I live in a house on a hill  
Surrounded by spruces and maples,  
Where the spirit may garner its fill  
Of wholesome and natural staples.

The birds and the winds never cease  
A pæan melodious as Mozart,  
Proclaiming the pleasures of peace,  
As compared with the pains of the Bozart.

There the reverend sanctities walk  
With a lordly and Israelite carriage,  
And they penalize people who talk  
Of art and companionate marriage.

I'm as free as a bird in the air;  
I'm as hale as a fish in the *aqua*,  
And the only discomfort I bear  
Is the minor complaint of Chautauqua.

I live with an orthodox Lord  
In a kind of suburban Nirvana;  
My *corpus* is sound as a Ford,  
And my *mens* is refreshingly *sana*.

I am far from the *dernier cri*  
In dining and writing and fashions,  
And I follow the bird and the bee  
In the ordered régime of my passions.

I'm opposed to the trend of the time,  
To the febrile caprice of the minute;  
And—wait till I finish this rhyme—  
A hell of a lot there is in it!

### III

I yodel a bachelor life;  
I sing of the joys of the single;  
I scoff at a man with a wife,  
And laugh at the thought that they mingle.

I cavort and I dine as I please;  
I pay court to the vine and to beauty;  
I blow (when I'm flush) like a breeze  
From acquisitive cutie to cutie.

I am free of the fear of the wed  
(For the female's capricious in temper)  
That, at last, the inviolate bed  
Will enact the familiar *sic semper*.

I am free in my work and my play,  
My speech and my dress and my habits;  
There is none *ex cathedra* to say  
My brightest remarks are like Babbitt's.

I never have need to compete  
With the wiles of a popular mummer,  
And, provided I'm fond of the heat,  
I can stay in the city all summer.

I never am prey to the thought  
That my manner of loving and living  
Is less than the bozos who taught  
The missus the pleasures of giving.

The whimsies I serve are my own,  
Be they politics, peaches or ponies,  
With never a critical groan  
From a creature of different hormones.

I am absolute lord of my time;  
I am master and mate of the minute;  
And—wait till I finish this rhyme—  
A hell of a lot there is in it!

#### IV

The benedict's lot I espouse,  
And my arteries quiver with pity  
For the scholar, the sailor, the souse  
Alone in the maw of the city.

Wherever they read or they roam,  
Their lore and their liquor are hollow—  
The sedative honies of home  
Allay not the fevers that follow.

I sit in my cozy retreat  
Where all but the doorbell is quiet;  
The fender takes care of my feet,  
And the *frau* does the same for my diet.

She is lily and lotus and light;  
She is amaranth, rose and nepenthe,  
And our ingle is cozy and bright,  
And we look like a picture by Genthe.

My neurotic and ready dismay  
At the troubles that try me and trample,  
She keeps quite completely at bay  
By her beautiful Christian example.

My health is offensively rude;  
My closet is gaudy with raiment,  
And the fellows who usually sued,  
Are floored with a regular payment.

My smoking and drinking are par;  
Our evenings are fruitful and clannish;  
I'm learning to play the guitar,  
To walk with my head up, and Spanish.

I've a sense of the value of time,  
And I've ordered my days to the minute;  
And—wait till I finish this rhyme—  
A hell of a lot there is in it!

## V

I sing of the sensitive soul—  
The poet and dreamer and mystic—  
And *cano* the glamorous goal,  
That shines in the spirit artistic.

The troubles of Tellus I flee;  
The bubbles of Helicon follow;  
The argentine scales of the sea  
I strum on the harp of Apollo.

Through delicate ether I swank,  
And leap on the back of the Lion;  
The fresh little breezes I spank  
With the beautiful belt of Orion.

The mufti of reason I shed,  
The boots of the weary and doleful,  
And in Denishawn draperies tread  
A cosmos pre-Einstein and soulful.

With Triton I tumble in brine,  
And converse with the vagabond sparrow;  
Of the boughs of the cedar and pine  
I whittle Diana an arrow.

I escape the miasma and mist  
Of the sowers and reapers and mourners,  
And fly to my luminous tryst  
With angels on heavenly corners.

The is and the was are my meat,  
And I guzzle the wine of the will be;  
My purple psychoses repeat  
The trance of the tremulous Trilby.

I depart from the beaches of Time  
In a shallop as frail as the minute;  
And—wait till I finish this rhyme—  
A hell of a lot there is in it!



## VI

With lilies and languors I'm done;  
With lotus and beautiful letters;—  
I chant of a place in the sun,  
And a horse in the van of go-getters.

I tug (as they say) at the leash;  
I sniff at the roses of piffle;  
I'm finished for good with hasheesh,  
The lute and the lyrical snifle.

The procreant Charles M. Schwab  
I laud, as the ancients the phallus,  
Who tickles the ducts of the mob  
With pride in the virtuous callous.

My waking is loud with Success;  
My sleep is impatient and nervous:  
I ride with the mighty *noblesse*,  
And distribute the coppers of Service.

I am sick of the sixty Beyonds;  
Art bores me with every new mania;  
I want to be Something in bonds,  
And kind to the Queen of Rumania.

I long to be making the grade  
And stand with the Mellons and Morgans;  
I want to be Genghis of trade,  
And Khan of conservative organs.

I play with the bulls and the bears;  
I'm the Bartlett of market quotations;  
I am in on the private affairs  
Of the principal borrowing nations

I am quite *en rapport* with the *Times*;  
I am thoroughly up to the minute;  
And—now that I'm done with these rhymes—  
A hell of a lot there is in it!





## LITANY BEFORE ELECTION



---

## *Litany Before Election*

---

Oh, Lord, Who knowest the human heart,  
(A thousand other things apart)  
Whose constant purpose is the good  
Of all the human brotherhood—  
Look down (accept this humble rhyme)  
And guard us in election-time!  
Oh, let the people vote for Biggs,  
And not for Jiggs, or Squiggs, or Riggs,  
Or Kelly, Cohen, Bing or Brown,  
Or Toohey, Thompson, Tubbs or Towne!  
When sorrow has no more surprise,  
And stars look down like Borgia's eyes;  
When hope and hair and teeth are gone,  
And trucks and I awake the dawn,  
How good, in this abyss of care  
To know that Biggs is in the chair!  
We do so much, perforce, by rote,  
And often know not how we vote;  
We stumble through the dark below,  
But Thou canst see what way we go—

Thy Castle on the Upper Rhine  
Commands a prospect extra fine—  
So lend Thy vision to our souls,  
And leave it with us at the polls,  
That we may see the name of Biggs,  
And not of Jiggs, or Squiggs, or Riggs.  
With Biggs elected, what are then  
The ninety million plagues of men?  
What wretch, who would not be content  
With Biggs as Mayor or President?—  
Whose heart would break at last, if Brown  
Achieved the goal, or Tubbs or Towne.  
This troubled world would be so bright  
If people did but vote aright;  
Would be so free of grief and sin  
If only men like Biggs were in;  
If men like Biggs were Coroner,  
Or Alderman, or Treasurer.  
So, Lord, Who missest not a chance  
To make the world like Paris, France;  
Whose constant purpose is the good  
Of all the human brotherhood,  
When next election comes to town  
(The view is excellent) look down,  
Erase the names of Squiggs and Jiggs  
And cast a million votes for Biggs!

## THE MIMIC MUSE



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## *The Mimic Muse*

---

### I

#### The Shropshire Lad's Cousin

*(An Even Gloomier Fellow Than His Celebrated  
Relative)*

### 1

When I was one and twenty,  
My ills were in their prime,  
With aches and pains aplenty,  
And gout before my time;  
I had the pyorrhea,  
And fever turned me blue—  
They said that I would be a  
Dead man at twenty-two.

Now I am two and twenty,  
The aches and pains I thought  
Were miseries aplenty,  
Compared to these, are naught;

And even these are bubbles,  
That scarce can worry me,  
When I regard the troubles  
I'll have at twenty-three.

2

With rue my heart is laden  
For many a lass I had,  
For many a rouge-lipped maiden,  
That's got a richer lad.

In rooms too small for leaping  
Such lads as I are laid,  
While richer boys are keeping  
The girls that do not fade.

3

Comrade, never take a bath,  
For you'll tread the selfsame path;  
For you'll do the selfsame work,  
Where the dust and cinders lurk.

Comrade, cast aside your hope  
Of the benefits of soap:  
Though you scrub the morn away,  
You'll be soiled at close of day.



Along the street as I came by,  
 A cinder hit me in the eye;  
 When I went walking in the field,  
 I stepped upon a snake concealed;  
 When in the woods I took a stroll,  
 A she-bear nipped my arm off whole;  
 When I went swimming in the creek,  
 A porpoise bit me in the cheek;  
 And so it goes, from dawn to dusk;  
 There's never corn; there's only husk.

When famished, I sit down to eat,  
 The cook has always burned the meat;  
 When I would rest my weary head,  
 A score of mice are in my bed;  
 When cheerful friends I do desire,  
 Their houses ever are on fire.  
 There's nothing good, there's only ill:  
 In winter, hot; in summer, chill;  
 And when my time is come to die,  
 There will not be a grave to buy.

When I go to the circus,  
 My heart is full of woe,  
 For thinking of the people  
 Who used to see the show,  
 And now are laid below.

They stood beneath the tent-cloth,  
And heard the lion roar;  
They saw the striped hyena  
Revolve upon the floor;  
And now they are no more.

I think of all the corpses  
Worm-eaten in the shade;  
I cannot chew my peanuts  
Or drink my lemonade:  
Good God, I am afraid!

I see the grave-worms feeding  
Upon the tigers' tails;  
I see the people quiet  
As prisoners in jails,  
Because they're dead as nails.

Then what's the good of watching  
The horses and trapeze,  
The big show and the little,  
And the menageries?—  
We're all a lot of fleas.

6

I had three friends in Gotham,  
And one of them is dead,  
And one of them has palsy  
And cannot leave his bed.

And now I know the other  
Will soon desert me too,  
And end his days in Sing Sing,  
For something he will do.

7

Northward wing the happy swallows  
To their olden haunts again,  
And the poison ivy follows,  
And the quinsy and the rain.

Soon the lovers will be walking  
In the raw, malicious air,  
Through catarrhal noses talking  
Slush no mortal man can bear.

8

"Terence, this is fearful rot,  
Putting poison in the pot;  
All your song is measles, mumps,  
Cramps and colic and the dumps;  
Terence, you are rather frayed—  
Go and have your teeth X-rayed."

Go ahead, my lad, and talk,  
While your legs are fit to walk;  
While your hair is on your head:  
You'll not talk when you are dead.

Scorn, at will, my gloomy stuff;  
You'll regret it soon enough.  
Wait a year or two, and see  
What a sorry sight you'll be;  
Your liver and your eyes will fail;  
You'll be languishing in jail;  
You'll be run over by a cart,  
And get a lesion on your heart;  
Stir not till I have my say:  
The girl you love will run away,  
But she'll not stay away for good  
And leave you to your solitude;  
To her lad she'll not be true—  
She'll come back and marry you;  
And the kind of life you'll lead  
Will make your bones and marrow bleed.  
Wait a minute, I'm not through  
With the things in store for you:  
All you'll get to eat will be  
Lettuce, nuts and hominy;  
This much, too, I can foretell:  
You'll get ill and won't get well;  
Neither will you die, my lad;  
Worse for you, and that's but bad;  
You'll not die of mortal ache:  
They will hang you by mistake;  
They'll discover it too late,  
Which is just the usual fate.  
So I sing this doleful song  
Just to dull your sense of wrong.

When you've read my verses through,  
Not a thing can make you blue;  
You will be prepared for all  
Fearful things that will befall.  
Fare you well, lad; on your way:  
You'll break a leg ere close of day.

## II

### *Mr. Vachel Lindsay Discovers Radio*

In nineteen hundred and twenty-two,  
A son of Italy,  
A short, swart son-of-a-gun from Italy  
Broke right through—  
Broke through the ether with a bang and a crash,  
Broke through the ether with a flip and a flash;  
Yes, he did,  
*Sure*, he did,  
*Did!*  
*Did!*  
*Did!*  
Crashed into the ether and broke right through  
From Kennebunkport to Kalamazoo;  
From Kalamazoo to San Francisco;  
Broke right through  
And invented radio;  
Crashed through the air  
Like a zim-zam Zbysco,  
From Kennebunkport to San Francisco;



Tied up Cohen and Shultz and Harrigan,  
From Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon—  
Tied them up in knots of air—

*Hey, you, Marconi, are you there?*

Bill Marconi,

Son of Italy,

Say, you, Marconi, are you there?

I'll say you're there!

*There,*

*There,*

*There!*

Crashing through the air

Without any wire;

I'll say you're there

Like a prairie fire;

*Radio,*

*Radio,*

*Radio,*

*Radio!*

Right through space with a crash like Zbysco,

From Salem, Mass., to San Francisco!

*Hey, there, Buffalo,*

*Get that soprano!*

*Hey, there, Idaho,*

*Get that piano!*

*Get Paderewski pounding the piano!*

*X Y Z*

*W J G*

*P Q D*

Hey, Pennsylvania,  
Do you know  
That California  
Had an inch of snow?  
Oklahoma is cloudy and cool,  
And they're putting on their rubbers  
When they send their kids to school.  
Did you hear about the drop  
In Minnesota,  
And the bumper crop  
In South Dakota?—  
The bumper, bumper, bumper crop!  
Listen in,  
You son of sin,  
Amalgamated Indigo took another flop;  
*Flop,*  
*Flop,*  
*Flop!*  
The ships on the ocean  
Beat a retreat;  
They're scared to death;  
They hold their breath;—  
There's a commotion down on the Street;  
The bulls and the bears, and the bears and the  
    bulls,  
Tear one another's hair by the hard handfuls;—  
The bulls and the bears  
Are at one another's throats;  
The bulls and the bears  
Get one another's goats!

*Radio,*

*Radio,*

*Radio,*

*Radio!*

Hey, there, Bill,

Marconi Bill,

Hold 'em still,

While the news is crashed,

While the news is hurled,

Right through the centre of the bloomin' world!

*W O P*

*F T G—*

Shoot the news from every station,

Let it flash through all the nation!

Spark on spark,

Spark on spark,

Fiery needlepoints in the dark;

A million, billion, trillion, quadrillion,

Sextillion needlepoints hitting their mark.

The panther in the jungle,

The ostrich on the sand,

Is listening in

On Sousa's band;

The yak in the zoo

Is saying to the gnu,

"What's on the radio,

Gnu, what's new?"

The otter says

To the simple seal,



“I otter get  
An ottermobile;  
I heard all the prices,  
At the latest show;  
I heard all the prices  
On the rad-i-o.”  
The lion and the tiger  
Are jazzing on the sand,  
They’re jazzing on the Niger  
To a Broadway band;—  
Hey, there, Mischa,  
Tune up your fiddle;  
The Sphinx is getting ready  
To unravel her riddle;  
It’s radio, radio, everywhere,  
To the lamb in the meadow  
And the llama at prayer—  
*Radio, radio, everywhere.*

In the days when messages  
Went by pony—  
Those were the slow days, westward-ho days,  
Those were the watch-your-step-as-you-go days—  
Who would have thought that a guy like Marconi,  
Nothing but a Dago  
From across the foam,  
A bloomin’ Roman  
Out of Rome;  
Yes, he is;  
*Sure, he is;*

Your teacher will tell you if she knows her biz;  
Your father and your mother,  
The corner cop,  
Your sister and your brother  
Will tell you he's a Wop—  
Who would have thought that a guy like that  
Would have the radio under his hat?  
Well, he did;  
*Sure*, he did;—  
What does it matter if it's Dago or it's Yid?  
Whoever did is the Kandy Kid;—  
Yes, he is;  
*Sure*, he is;  
What does it matter where he got his phiz?  
*Radio*,  
*Radio*,  
*Radio*,  
*Radio!*  
There's a guy who knew his biz!  
There's a boy  
Who stirred up things;  
Who plays a fiddle without any strings;  
Who taught us how to fly  
Without any wings.  
Hats off to you, Bill;  
Hats off, boy;  
From Pekin, China,  
To Peoria, Illinois.  
*Radio!*  
*Radio!*

*X Y Z!*

Skips over mountains  
And scoops up the sea;—  
Who would have thought that a guy like that  
Had the radio under his hat?

### III

#### *Miss Millay Says Something Too*

##### 1

I want to drown in good-salt water,  
I want my body to bump the pier;  
Neptune is calling his wayward daughter,  
Crying, "Edna, come over here!"

I hate the town and I hate the people;  
I hate the dryness of floor and pave;  
The spar of a ship is my tall church-steeple;  
My soul is wet as the wettest wave.

I'm seven-eighths salt and I want to roister  
Deep in the brine with the submarine;  
I speak the speech of the whale and oyster;  
I know the ways of the wild sardine.

I'm tired of standing still and staring  
Across the sea with my heels in dust:  
I want to live like the sober herring,  
And die as pickled when die I must.

My neighbor is a goose girl  
 And tends her silly geese;  
 But I love a rakish earl  
 And hunt the golden fleece.

My neighbor lives on bread and milk  
 And shuts her door on show;  
 But I would rather fall in silk  
 Than rise in calico.

My neighbor goes to bed at eight  
 And never sees the moon;  
 But I never stir till late,  
 And go to bed at noon.

My neighbor, fearful of a fall,  
 Was wed before her prime;  
 But I never wed at all  
 And have a better time.

What do I care if people stare  
 Or care what people say?  
 The golden dogs I'm going to  
 Are handsome dogs and gay.

## IV

### *Mr. Yeats Wants a Pot of Gold, All of a Sudden*

Belovéd, had I a pot of gold  
Out of the coffers of the West,  
Or even half a pot of gold,  
I would buy you a cloth to cover your chest,  
A green cloth and a blue cloth,  
Gold or silver or even both,  
A broidered cloth and a new coat  
Out of the wool of a woolly goat,  
And out of the hide of the boar that mourns  
By Cummen Strand for his stolen bristles,  
And lives on hazel nuts and thistles,  
And blows all night on his mouse-gray horns;  
With buttons made of the curds of the foam  
That shimmer like cheeses in the gloam,  
Until Maeve's voice and Niamh's would call  
Like bitter winds from the grave, and bawl  
Because a cloth and a coat like that  
Knocked everything that went before,  
The cloths and the coats the proud queens wore,  
Into the shape of a cocked hat;  
Because such a cloth and such a coat  
Were enough to waken a queen's goat.  
Belovéd, let not your heart be sad;  
You know, as I am an Irish man,  
By the buckle of Kitty O'Houlihan,  
You know I would buy you the cloth if I had,

Rose of the World, a pot of gold,  
Or even half a pot of gold,  
And if you were untrue to me then,  
Heart, I would take it back again.

V

*Mr. Walter de la Mare Makes the Little  
Ones Dizzy*

1

When winking stars at dusk peep through  
Pin-holes in the tent of blue,  
Nurse puts spectacles on nose  
And points them out to Little Lou.

With sad distempers all awry,  
She stares with a myopic eye,  
And mumbles names of stars and spheres  
As they were letters in the sky.

Orion, Great Bear, Dipper—she  
Cons them with a cracked “Tee, hee!”  
While wretched Little Lou must keep  
Nose to the pane unwillingly.

While ants crawl up and down his back,  
She ties him to the zodiac,  
And feeds him his astronomy  
With many a salty pinch or whack.



Hour by hour goes slowly past;  
The stars, like measles, fade at last;  
Nurse goes upstairs, but Little Lou  
Is to the window frozen fast.

2

When the Great Captain Sun goes home  
And calls his spearsmen from the dome,  
Sheep-bells, cow-bells, goat-bells and ram-bells  
Tinkle and jangle in the gloam.

Pastures that were pistachio green,  
In the slate dusk can scarce be seen,  
And now are empty, where but late  
Quick goats, slow cows, dumb sheep have been.

Then elves, that make the barn their house,  
And in the bins and mangers browse,  
Bob up and down in oats and hay  
And bleat like sheep and moo like cows.

3

Speckled with glints of star and moonshine,  
The house is dark and still as stone,  
And Fido sleeps in the dogwood kennel  
With forelegs over his mutton bone.

Then out of the walnut wood, the squirrels  
Peep, with their bushy tails upreared,  
And the oak on the wood's-edge stretches his  
    branches,  
And combs with his roots his mossy beard.

Then ninnies and oafs and hook-nosed zanies,  
And rabbits bred in the realm of Wales,  
Dance and scream in the frosty starlight,  
Swinging the squirrels by the tails,

Till out of the wood, Grandfather Nightmare  
Rides in a chariot of Stilton cheese,  
And eats the ninnies, the oafs and zanies,  
The rabbits, the oak and the walnut trees.

## VI

*Mr. W. H. Davies Snares Nature in a Few  
    Felicitous Stanzas*

### 1

A rainbow in the rainy sky  
Makes rainy too, my rolling eye,  
And I could wish, when up I look,  
That rainbows were not placed so high;  
    Then might I pluck one  
    Lightly down,  
    And wear it proudly  
    Through the town,



That all might stop upon their way,  
Observe the lovely sight and say:

“Upon my word, upon my word,  
A cuckoo and a rainbow, Lord;  
A sight that may  
Not come our way  
Again till heaven with moss is floored:  
May never come  
This side the tomb.”

2

In every daisy in the field  
Full thirty morals are concealed,  
And though but one of them be mine,  
And I forget the twenty-nine,  
Yet am I better off by far  
Than rich men and their butlers are,  
Who ever have of morals none,  
While happy I at least have one.

3

As lightly the wet fields I walked  
Three leagues from London's noisy crowd,  
I saw two ducks and seven drakes  
And heard a blackbird singing loud.

Two dozen cows, knee-deep in grass,  
I saw, and twenty-seven goats,  
And heard a hundred sparrows pour  
Upon a bank ten thousand notes.

And, though I've seen the golden notes  
That rich men pour in city banks,  
And know the sparrow's note is "cheep,"  
I lifted up my heart in thanks.

## VII

### *Edwin Arlington Robinson Gets at the Root of the Matter*

"Well, now," she said, "that we are met again  
Upon familiar terms that yet contain  
Enough restraint to make it interesting,  
I want to ask you in a friendly way  
If you knew Peter Perkins?"

"And if so,"

I answered, hiding my perplexity,  
"You surely mean what I infer you mean,  
That Peter Perkins was a man I knew?"

She smiled that wan and wandering smile of hers,  
A soft confusion of her clarity,  
And with her little finger flicked away  
A speck of gold from out her shining hair.

I knew she heard me though I was not sure,  
And cracked my knuckles in a casual way.

“We might as well be somber now,” she said,  
“And start to psycho-analyze this man.  
He had a soul a stranger could see through,  
And yet he had a trifling way with him,  
Opaque transparency. I think the phrase  
Has just enough simplicity to be  
Complex enough. Don’t crack your knuckles, please,  
For Peter Perkins did that very thing.  
I don’t know why, do you?”

I turned away;  
I sensed the tragedy in all she said,  
Yet could not say a word.

“I like to think,”  
She wandered on, “that Peter Perkins might  
Have been an altogether different man,  
If God had made him so. But as it was,  
He was but Peter Perkins to the town;  
His wife was Mrs. Perkins, and his son  
Was Peter Perkins, Junior. That’s the way  
The world was made and that’s the way it will  
Continue to the end, unless it’s changed.  
Yet Peter Perkins when his hour had struck  
Lay down and died. What else was there to do?”

I shrugged my shoulders. She went up the stairs.  
A storm was coming up; I could not find  
My hat, and so I stayed and watched it come.

## VIII

### *Poor Mr. Heine Suffers Some Translations and Gives Up*

#### 1

Maiden with the cheeks of cherry,  
Maiden with the eyes of blue,  
Much I thought you loved me very,  
Much I thought that I loved you.

Me, alas, you have forsaken;  
Now you love another lad,  
And I see I was mistaken,  
Thinking that I would be sad.

#### 2

I dreamed I stood in the forest,  
And heard the singing birds;  
As sweet as thine were their voices,  
And as meaningless their words.

I listened and listened and listened,  
And thought I heard you call  
Something out of the treetops  
That didn't matter at all.

You are simple as a daisy,  
You are blushful as a rose,  
And your little teeth are pebbles  
Over which a streamlet flows.

Nothing innocent as you are  
Ever under heaven did go,  
Nothing, Fräulein, save your lover,  
He who used to think you so.



**SONGS OF FAITH IN THE YEAR  
AFTER NEXT**





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## *Songs of Faith in the Year After Next*

---

### I

The day I like the least is Sunday,  
And after that, I don't like Monday,  
And after that, I don't care whose day  
Tuesday is—I don't like Tuesday,  
And after that, let other men say,  
“Pooh,” and “Bah”—I don't like Wednesday,  
And after that, my very worse day  
Is—in short, I don't like Thursday,  
And after that, my evil-eye day  
Is—the fact's,—I don't like Friday,  
And after that, I won't grow fatter, say,  
Because they have a day called Saturday—  
But the day I like the least is Sunday,  
And after that, I don't like Monday,  
And after that, I don't care whose day  
Tuesday is, I don't like Tuesday,  
And after that, etc. . . .

## II

I do not like to be alone:  
My solar plexus turns to stone;  
And yet, I know of nothing worse 'n  
Living with another person;  
I hate to be a bachelor,  
And marriage likewise, I abhor:—  
Emphatically I resent  
The things that people don't invent.

## III

The year is at the spring, and so  
Things begin to spring and grow;  
Trees afford a shade, e.g.,  
For those who can afford a tree;  
Robins chirp and roses flourish;  
Esculent herbs begin to nourish;  
Fields are rife with floral data,  
Which cows and sheep consume, pro rata;  
Nature, squiffed on pre-war May,  
Simply throws the stuff away:—  
Four out of five, as things are now,  
Get pyorrhea, anyhow.

## IV

Grant me, O Lord, no neater rhyme,  
Nor use nor usufruct of pelf,

But just a thought, from time to time,  
Of something other than myself!

Oh, let me think of bug or beef;  
Of Bismarck or the Caspian Sea,  
Of anything to get relief  
From that confounded nuisance, me!

I know myself quite well by heart;  
I know the business of my soul,  
And I should very gladly part  
From that pestiferous rigmarole.

Oh, let me think of Joan of Arc;  
Of truffles, queens and kitchen-maids;  
Of George the Fifth and Central Park;  
Of cheese and Labor Day parades!

Oh, let me think of Lipton's tea;  
Of Prester John and Pilsen beer,  
Of any bloomin' thing but me,  
And that eternal, "*Weh is mir!*"

## V

Soldiers have to fight and swear  
To win the stripes they proudly wear;  
While zebras, most unfit for war,  
Have stripes enough to fill a corps.  
Such unequal distribution  
Is part of Heaven's constitution.

## VI

Between the wanting and the getting  
We lose our hair and hope in fretting;  
So, when we get, the thing we've gotten  
Is, so to speak, less ripe than rotten.

## VII

In the merry month of Spring  
Streams awake and robins sing;  
Grass grows green, and sap begins  
To tickle trees about the shins;  
Flowers bestar the lively fields,  
And every cow her quota yields;  
The air is soft and so are you;  
The sky, and all who think, are blue:—  
Now isn't this a silly thing  
For any adult man to sing,  
Who might, with hefty he-men, range  
The pastures of the Stock Exchange?

## VIII

Babies haven't any hair;  
Old men's heads are just as bare;—  
Between the cradle and the grave  
Lies a haircut and a shave.

## IX

I never see the long giraffe,  
But that I am constrained to laff:  
It seems he'd starve to death before  
His food could reach his humidor;  
Yet so ingenious is the Lord,  
He makes me think of Henry Ford.

## X

The small chameleon has the knack  
Of turning blue or green or black,  
And yet, whatever hue he don,  
He stays a small cham-e-le-on.

## XI

A forest takes from every tree  
Its individuality;—  
There are so many in a wood,  
None gets the courtesy it should;  
While on the town's too barren page  
A sapling is a personage:  
A tree is wise to emigrate  
To town, where it can stand in state.

## XII

The brook comes tumbling down the hill  
With H<sub>2</sub>O the stream to fill;  
The stream, it hurries all aquiver  
With water for the richer river,  
Which, in its turn, eternally  
Runs with oblations to the sea;  
But when the sea steams up in rain,  
They get their water back again:—  
None flies to serve another's ends  
Without a thought of dividends.

## XIII

The turnip and the cabbage are  
Not lovely as a rose or star;  
The beet and radish in the stilly  
Earth, compare not with the lily;  
A cow or sheep is not to be  
Considered with a peony;  
And yet, they brew delicious juices,  
That have their sound plebeian uses;  
*Sans* which, we'd all turn up our toes  
At lily, peony or rose:—  
Alas, that Beauty's thousand graces  
Depend on Nature's homely phases!



## XIV

The lapidary care bestowed  
By God in fashioning the toad;  
The expert craftsmanship which He  
Spent on the gnu's topography;  
The thought which loosened from that Brow  
The crab, the camel and the cow,  
With equal lavishness He spent  
On many a priest and president.

## XV

The horse, on his ferruginous feet,  
Stands patient in the muggy street,  
Untied, unguarded, and so free  
To make a dash for liberty;  
And yet, he stands and knows no goad  
To shake his servitude and load,  
And waits and bears the heat because  
No rein is tugging at his jaws.  
I watch the little men who pass  
That dumb and dinosauric mass,  
Whom he might, with a casual hoof,  
Consign to the domain called "Pouf!"  
And feel in every line and limb  
Contemptuous of the likes of him.

## XVI

The head that wears a crown may be  
Inclined to some anxiety,  
But, on the other hand, I know  
A derby domes its meed of woe;  
The straw, Fedora and the plug  
Top many a lined and harried mug!  
The kind of lid a man may wear  
Is not an index of his care,  
And so, I'd rather take a sling  
From Fortune kelled like a king.

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTE**



---

## *Anthropological Note*

---

When the mountains rose from fire,  
And the seas fell down between,  
Ere the rock confessed desire  
In a bacchanal of green;  
When Earth sizzled like a sun,  
And the steaming tempest raved,  
There was none to sin, and none  
To be damned or to be saved.

In that time the Lord could look  
From His heavenly balcony  
On a land no sages shook,  
On a free and fishless sea;  
There was neither beast nor bird  
To disturb His quiet days;  
None to slay Him with a word,  
None to damn Him or to praise.

But a mischief in the blood  
Even of a God is rife,  
So He took a bit of mud  
And He tickled it to life;  
Deemed it just, perhaps, a jape;  
Had no calculated plan—  
But the mud became an ape,  
And the ape became a Man.

Well, it proved a sorry jape,  
And His troubles then began,—  
For the mud stayed in the ape,  
And the ape lived in the Man;  
And the mud the ape perplexed,  
And the ape the Man did prod,  
And the Man, in his turn, vexed  
With his irritations, God.

This the Lord had not foreseen;  
This was never in His plan;  
And it roused His holy spleen,  
So He turned at last on Man;  
And they've dealt each other blows  
Since an immemorial day,  
Till the Man is drunk with woes,  
And I'm sure the Lord is gray.

Though they sometimes call a truce,  
And a friendliness pretend,  
I can hear His, "What's the use!  
It is time to make an end."

I can see Him in His ire,  
In a super-Freudian dream,  
Throw the hills into the fire,  
And the Man into the steam.





**INTERLUDE, FOR A SOLITARY FLUTE**



---

*Interlude, for a Solitary Flute*

---

I

Little I knew, when morning-white  
Mated merrily with the green,  
How rare a thing, how very rare  
Was true despair!

Though I made songs of dark delight  
Of things I had not felt or seen,  
Little I knew how rare a thing  
Was this despair I used to sing!

Now morning-white and leaf-green  
Have quarreled, and seldom kiss or speak,  
I know how rare, how far from fair  
Is true despair!

Much have I felt and much have seen,  
And now I know a life may break  
As a twig is broken from a tree—  
God pity all our company,  
If God there be!

*For now I know how rare a thing  
Is this despair I used to sing!*

Let those who can, cling close to God,  
Against the day when this may be:  
Ibis or priest or fane or fire,  
Totem or tomb or creed or choir;

Seize Him in sky or sea or sod,  
Temple or hill or scroll or tree:  
There is no other song will bear  
So dread a burden as despair!

Cling close to Him, forlorn Man;  
Cling close to Him in bog or spire:  
There is no other song will bear  
So still a burden as despair!

*For now I know how rare a thing  
Is this despair I used to sing!*

Sing it, sing it, if you can;  
String for the song a lesser lyre,  
And see how suddenly the note  
Dies on the steel in brain and throat!

*I know how rare, how rare a thing  
Is this despair  
I used to sing!*

## II

Some shall dig  
The hills of Use,  
And some shall follow  
The Gold Wild Goose.

And the hills shall open  
And be revealed,  
And their glittering fruits  
The rocks shall yield—

Thrones and chariots  
For lords of Use,  
And death for the hunters  
Of the Gold Wild Goose—

The Gold Wild Goose  
That cries in the mist  
With the voice of Buddha,  
The voice of Christ,

The voice of Mohammed,  
And Moses' voice,  
Till they who hear it  
Rise and rejoice—

Rise and follow  
By land and sea  
To Mecca or Ganges  
Or Galilee,

And die in the desert,  
Or die in the stream,  
Or die on the hill-top  
Dreaming a dream

Of the Gold Wild Goose  
That cries in the mist  
With the voice of Buddha  
Or Moses or Christ.

### III

Sorrow that cries  
Like a wind on water,  
Is still of Eve  
A natural daughter.

For a man may lie  
With her, and she  
Will give herself unto him  
Utterly.

For Sorrow's a woman  
A Man may take  
And know, till his heart  
And body break.



Sorrow, that cries  
Like the windy waters,  
May bear him sons,  
And bear him daughters:

Heirs of substance,  
And heirs of breath—  
Hope and Dream,  
And even Death;

Power and Tears,  
And Prayer and Faith,  
Strength and Song—  
And even Death.

But Joy is a sylph  
In the winter air,  
That cracks his name  
With the whips of her hair.

For a man may lie  
With her, and she  
Elude and flee him  
Utterly:—

Body to body,  
A hell apart,  
With her laugh in his brain  
And her loss in his heart.

And she will bear him  
This bastard twain—  
The monster, Fear  
And the hunchback, Pain.

A man may lie  
With her, and she  
Leave in his arms  
The salt of the sea ;

A knife in his heart,  
And drouth on his breath,  
Terror and Pain—  
But never, Death.

But Sorrow, that cries  
Like a wind on water,  
Is still of Eve  
A natural daughter.

For a man may lie  
With her, and she  
Will give herself unto him  
Utterly,

Till the sun's red thunder,  
The night's black drum  
Cease, and his love  
His peace become.

#### IV

We took our love by each white hand  
And went into a summer land,  
Where fadeless fruit and blossoms blew,  
And amaranth and lotus grew.

And there the flower of sleep we ate,  
And bared the breast of our dreams to fate,  
And when the veins of the moon ran white,  
We drank the ichor in leaves of night.

And yet we knew, we knew it well,  
That love must tread the asphodel;  
That noon would conquer with drums and brass  
The honied silence of love and grass.

The hours that fell at our feet we threw  
Like fretful pebbles into the blue,  
And when the eyes of our love looked far,  
We screened his dream with the morning-star.

When sundown sang of a day that's dead,  
We twined the amaranth round love's head;  
We laughed our thought of the singing free,  
And lifted love for the sun to see.

And yet we knew, we knew it well,  
That love must walk on the asphodel;  
That time would conquer with steel and brass  
The pitiful heaven of all who pass.

V

Behold the crowd; from far it seems  
Such horror as an insect dreams;  
A swarm of super-bugs that prey  
On lesser beetles night and day.

How monstrous must the mass appear  
To wretched flies abuzz with fear!  
And what tremendous fireflies  
The linkéd glitter of their eyes!

And they, in their turn, how they must  
Ant-wise speck the crawling dust  
To the calm, observant Eyes  
Whose roomy sockets are the skies!

How furtive from its spacious place  
Peers that still, derisive Face!  
How human is the impulse that  
Brings that mighty Palm down flat!

They tread the ant and crush the fly,  
And soar a handsbreadth toward the sky,  
And light, in their fantastic pride,  
Into the Lord's insecticide.

## VI

In the fine land of Nowhere,  
On the far side of There,  
We shall be very happy,  
We shall have no care;  
You will be the blossom;  
I shall be the bough;  
In the great time coming  
After Now.

While you are crying,  
Listen to my song;  
My own heart is breaking,  
But I shall be strong:  
I shall be strong for thinking  
Of the fine days and fair,  
When we are done with being  
Anywhere.

While you are grieving,  
Listen to my tune:  
I shall be the heavens,  
You will be the moon;  
You will be the breezes;  
I shall be the air;  
When we are done with weeping  
Everywhere.

Sorrow shall not know us,  
Though we be her tears;  
Time shall not trouble us,  
Though we be as her years;  
For we shall be the silence  
That sits behind the door,  
In the long time coming  
Evermore.

## VII

No tree where lunar angels light,  
No birds whose feathers are afire,  
No hallelujahs in the night,  
When stars and silence are the choir.

No apparitions in the dawn,  
No sprite mercurial in the moon;  
The vision and the music gone,  
That were the first and only boon.

Only the ground with stones and worms,  
Only the road that's hard and long,  
Only the twisted human forms  
Whose labor is their only song.

Only the hour of troubled dust,  
The brambled bower, the windy ways;  
And shall I say, "Come, share my crust,  
Come share my cruse of stagnant days—



“My love, whose wandering eyes still sail  
Like ships upon the burning west;  
For whom the enchanted nightingale  
Sings Latmos up within your breast”?

And shall I say, “Let Latmos be:  
Endymion wanders, lost and blind,  
The endless night of Thessaly  
Whose nightingale is but a wind”?

My love, tall ships with chiselled prows  
Still sail where Triton shields his eyes,  
And silver under silver boughs,  
Endymion waits the moon to rise.

My love, for you the knightly years  
Stand golden in the sundown’s fire;  
For you the hills uncross their spears  
And bid you pass to your desire.

And shall I say, “Come, pause with me,  
Whose springs are weary of their seed”?  
And shall I so unfaithful be  
To your dear love for my drear need.

Your mantle of blue waters don;  
The lands with festival are rife;  
Your shoes of loveliness put on,  
And go, my love, and welcome life.

## VIII

Share with the heavens, the wind, a star, a tree,  
Your swift adventures into ecstasy;  
But let your heart your lachrymary be;

Share joy with sunset and the craggy sea;  
But let your heart your lachrymary be,  
Then you shall walk with Love and Beauty free.

Give delicate Love your sweetest dreams for gain,  
And make the Lord with your contentment vain,  
But let your tears fall deep into your brain:—

Then, though the cancer eat your soul away,  
Your malice shall be equal to the day,  
And your sardonic strength the night dismay.

## IX

The dream of that high roadway out of life,  
Soaring above  
The dust, the rending bitterness, the strife—  
That men call Love,  
I followed:  
Blesséd be God, Who hung so bright a star  
Above an abattoir!



The dream that shines upon the dying breath,  
The desperate story  
Wherewith men seek to light the mood of Death—  
The dream of Glory,  
I followed:  
Blesséd be God, Who hung so bright a star  
Above an abattoir!

The dream of Joy, the dream, that even Christ  
Wrung, earth-accursed,  
From the tenacious thorn, the thunderous mist,  
The acid thirst,  
I followed:  
Blesséd be God, Who hung so bright a star  
Above an abattoir!

The dream of Peace, where like a little wind  
To the indifferent grass,  
Life sings to the green quiet of the mind  
Of airy things that pass,  
I followed:  
Blesséd be God, Who hung so white a star  
Above an abattoir!

Blesséd be God, Who used me for this part:  
Who, for the richer savor of His wine,  
Crushed out of me the marrow and the heart,  
The hope, the dream, and for an anodyne,  
Hung star on lying star  
Above His abattoir;

Blesséd be He, Whom men have wisely feared,  
To whom the seas have sent their terror up—  
And may there be no stain upon His beard  
When next He quaffs the cup!

**SONGS OF FAIRLY UTTER DESPAIR**



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## *Songs of Fairly Utter Despair*

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### I

Now, alas, it is too late  
To buy Manhattan real estate,  
But when my father came to town,  
He could have bought for fifty down,  
And I should not be where I am:  
Yet does my father give-a-damn,  
Or ever say, "I'm sorry, boy,"  
Or looking at me, murmur, "Oy?"  
He does not grieve for what I've missed,  
And yet I'm called an Anarchist!

### II

I want to take a ship and go  
Abroad, but where I do not know:  
It isn't Paris, London, Rome,  
Nagasaki, Naples, Nome,

Honolulu, Teheran,  
Servia or Afghanistan;  
And yet I want to take a ship  
And give the place I'm in the slip—  
Lord, tell me where I want to go;  
Give a man a decent show!

### III

I ought to go to church and share  
With Him who sent it every care,  
And yet I am, beyond belief,  
Parsimonious with my grief,  
While He, who sent me every sorrow,  
Is far too proud to come and borrow.

### IV

I count the wrinkles on my brow,  
And wish I were a sheep or cow;  
Better, by far, yield milk or wool  
By carload and by bucketful,  
And be allowed to stand and stare,  
And nibble grass, and take the air,  
Than dream of golden mountain-tops,  
And be a mark for traffic-cops.  
The cow, she neither writes nor reads,  
But soundly sleeps and calmly feeds,

And takes the rainfall and the sun,  
The profit and the loss, as one.  
Love binds her in no bitter fetters:  
She leaves her mating to her betters.  
What though I swallow her at last?—  
*Her* trivial cares, not *mine*, are past;  
And should her mettle be in question,  
'Tis *I*, not *she*, gets indigestion!

## V

The green and leafy trees, they stand  
A solemn and impressive band,  
With decorations in their hats  
Like admirals and diplomats;  
And yet, their job is filling men  
As dumb as they, with oxygen—  
For all the splendid pomp they wear,  
They do but pump the world with air,  
Proving, that trees, beneath their hats,  
Are admirals and diplomats.

## VI

Of all the idiots that abound  
Above, beneath, and on the ground,  
The blinking squirrel is to me  
The deepest-sunk in idiocy—



He builds himself a catacomb  
Among the worms, and calls it home,  
And there he cowers, sore afraid  
Of bird and beast and man and maid,  
And when, at last, he leaves his rut,  
His goal is just another nut.

## VII

For sheer urbanity, I deem  
A cat deserving of the cream:—  
He does not sit and contemplate  
The various aspects of his fate,  
Or the strange world that round him flits;—  
When he sits down, he merely sits.  
Behold, upon my verses he  
Reposes with su-a-vity,  
Preferring the surrounding night  
To anything that I may write;  
Thus proving, that who most rehearses,  
Is not the ablest judge of verses.  
No feline Jezebel may vex  
His placid interludes with sex:—  
His destined hour must come to him,  
Nor can it fret his interim.  
It does not gnaw him like a vice,  
That other cats may catch more mice,  
Or that some remnants of his fish  
Or liver linger in the dish—

His appetite once gratified,  
He'll slumber by temptation's side,  
Too much philosopher to wake  
For catnip, siren, milk or steak.  
He has a greater use for sun  
Than Cæsar or Napole-on,  
Who garnered naught but sweat and heat  
Where Thomas toasts his noble feet.  
Not bound by custom or by tub,  
Finding a use in "There's the rub!"  
Oh, cat, I'd give all Gilead's balm,  
To have your cat—aleptic calm!

## VIII

I burned my candle at both ends,  
And now have neither foes nor friends;  
For all the lovely light begotten,  
I'm paying now in feeling rotten.

## IX

The lion with his kingly rage,  
Animates his arid cage,  
And to his cubicle so bare,  
Imparts a fierce and jungle air;  
Proving—however some may take it—  
That life is what they let you make it.

## X

It is not Beauty's fault that I  
No longer listen or reply,  
When in a thousand various tones,  
She plays her drums and saxophones,  
To call, with sensitive alarms,  
My spirit to creative arms.

It is not Beauty's fault, I gaze  
With mackerel eye upon her ways;  
Her greens and seres and lights and shades,  
Her bright tableaux and swift parades.

My spirit still would much endure  
To be her slave and paramour;  
To be a partner in her spring,  
And share her winter sorrowing;  
To spend her suns' unminted gold,  
And race her winds through hot and cold,  
Or toss the silver of her moons  
On bars of her divine saloons.

Alas, her gifts no longer stir  
Because my glands are through with her!

## XI

With me my little world shall die,  
My personal earth, peculiar sky,  
My biased God and special sight  
Of trees and men and day and night;—  
A sudden, conscious gleam withdrawn  
From that great glass which mirrors dawn;  
Two tangible hands, that reach above,  
To that fierce groping which is Love,  
And lead him down their narrow way  
To warmth and refuge for a day.

My eyes have helped bewildered spheres  
A pace or two along the years,  
And my reality has given  
An hour of glory unto Heaven;  
My thought has shot its impulses  
Through ocean's mighty arteries;  
And bits of disentangled mud  
Have drained the scarlet of my blood;  
Have stolen the quickness of my breath  
To stand like roses, flaunting Death.

Oh, I have been a friend to bless  
To all the host of nothingness;  
Have shared my tiny store—and yet  
How soon these ingrate things forget:  
The earth, the sea, the rose, the sky,  
They'll get themselves another guy!

## XII

I understand that women are  
As fickle as a gift cigar,  
And, as for all that I can say,  
It may be so (I've been away)  
But, fickle as the fair may be,  
They're constant as calamity,  
Compared to a capricious cuss  
Who sports the name of Morph-e-us.

He'll say, "Lie down—I'm standing near;  
Go pound (in ancient Greek) your ear;  
Go linger in the poppy-dells,  
And polish up your aging cells:  
Your thyroid looks a trifle blue;  
Your joints are drinking up the dew;  
Your outlook's wild, your credit's wan,  
And trucks will soon distribute dawn—  
So, go and tumble in the hay;  
Tomorrow is a tougher day!"

Oh, many a time (and even oft)  
My billion-buttoned clothes I've doffed,  
And hopeful as a babe unborn,  
Prepared to sleep through dawn and horn.  
I've thought of streams and forests cool,  
And perfect shots in Kelly pool;  
Of pastures where Pavlowa sheep  
Interpret deep and dreamless sleep;



I've counted sheep and lamb and ewe,  
Till we were mingled in a stew,  
And in a dark and fatal hour,  
My brave arithmetic went sour.  
I've thought of dark and restful shades,  
And not so dark or restful maids,  
Of trees and cabbages in rows,  
And this and that and them and those,  
Till three-inch skies across the way,  
Grew lovely with an eight-hour day;—  
And yet, for everything I tried,  
You'd think the bloody Greek had died.

Oh, go and say that women are  
As changeful as a bootleg bar;  
As Heaven's intent—but do not dare  
Their fickleness to this compare.  
Oh, do not dare, for if you do,  
I fear I shall agree with you.





CAROL FOR THE DAY AFTER  
CHRISTMAS



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*Carol for the Day After Christmas*

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I burn a reverential rhyme  
Unto the modest Muse of Crime,  
Unsung, unhung (I mean with bays)  
But generous to her devotees;—

Not indiscriminately kind;  
No friend to the burglarious mind;  
No dour divinity of jail—  
But Crime on an Extensive Scale!

Dear Muse (for nobler numbers fit)  
Of Those Who Get Away With It;  
For whom the fiscal welkin rings  
With praise of cabinets and kings;

In whose benign and fecund shade  
The grapevine sacrifice is made  
By Forward-Looking Men, who know  
Your cabalistic So-and-So;

By Leaders of the State and Thought;  
By Princes of the Never-Caught;  
By Lords of Enterprises, sung  
As Great Examples to the young:

Accept this bow (from me to you)  
And teach the bard a trick or two,  
And toss him an excessive bit  
From Super-Rogue-and-Hypocrite!

No Mighty Statesman would I be,  
Or Banker to Democracy;  
No splendid Chairman of the Board,  
And sit upon the whole damned gourd;—

But spill a little of the loot  
In decent radius of my boot;—  
Your teeming harvest festival  
Has swag enough for one and all!

LOVE-SONGS, AT ONCE TENDER AND IN-  
FORMATIVE—AN UNUSUAL COMBINATION IN  
VERSES OF THIS CHARACTER



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*Love-songs, at Once Tender and Informative*  
*—An Unusual Combination in Verses of This*  
*Character*

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I

Satyrs used to fall for nymphs,  
Just the same as other symphs;  
Same as many a modern goof,  
Cupid kept them on the hoof.

II

A woman, like the touted Sphinx,  
Sits, and God knows what she thinks;  
Hard-boiled men, who never fall,  
Say she doesn't think at all.



### III

Breathes there a man with hide so tough  
Who says two sexes aren't enough?

### IV

I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Were I not born to be in Dutch.

### V

Maid of Gotham, ere we part,  
Have a hospitable heart—  
Since our own delights must end,  
Introduce me to your friend.

### VI

She gave me her heart—  
Oh, the sweetness of it!  
She gave me her hand—  
The petiteness of it!

She gave me herself—  
Oh, the wonder of it!  
I gave her myself—  
Oh, the blunder of it!

## VII

Little bride, come over here,  
Tell me where you'll be next year;  
Quite unfearful of my doom,  
I should like to know with whom.

## VIII

If you love me, as I love you,  
We'll both be friendly and untrue.

## IX

When you are tired of me, and I  
Look mournfully upon the sky,  
We shall be friends, I hope, and meet  
Sometimes, and talk how times were sweet  
When we were sure no sword could sever  
Two people born to love forever.

## X

When you are old, and want to stay  
Beside the hearth the livelong day,  
Weaving with memorial grace  
Your youth in linen or in lace—  
Oh, what a picture you will be  
Of Age's sweet serenity;  
A symbol of a tranquil home  
From which but fools like me would roam!

## XI

Let us build a little house  
With instalments, love and craft,  
Fit for you, my precious mouse—  
Garden fore and garden aft.

There we'll love and play (I hope)  
Work, beget and dream (I trust)  
Sweetly with such problems cope  
As plague whatever stems of dust.

We shall have such rosy tryst;  
Ours will be a blessed fate;  
Love will daily grow (I wist)  
So (D.g.) will real estate.

When the jealous powers above  
Magic from our couplet steal,  
We may then conclude our love  
With a profitable deal.

## XII

My sanguine and adventurous dear,  
Whom long experience taught no fear,  
I shall make a ballad of  
The repetitions of your love.

Every time you love again,  
Former lovers failed in vain:

Your ardor rises like the sun  
On the last and only one.

You but tell the simple truth  
Out of your perennial youth;  
When I sing of you, I sing  
A heart whose every month is spring.

Marvellous unto my sight  
Your quasi-virginal delight;  
But dearer, sweeter, rarer yet,  
How you remember to forget.

Bless your heart, that phoenix-wise,  
Can from its amorous ashes rise:  
The years their disappointments waste  
On a memory so chaste.

### XIII

Your little hands,  
Your little feet,  
Your little mouth—  
Oh, God, how sweet!

Your little nose,  
Your little ears,  
Your eyes, that shed  
Such little tears!

Your little voice,  
So soft and kind;

Your little soul,  
Your little mind!

#### XIV

Love, you brought me everything;  
I gave little—  
But the beauty that I sing  
May be brittle;—

May be brittle, and so might—  
Now I've spoken!—  
Have fallen on another's sight  
And been broken!

#### XV

The honey of the Hybla bees  
Is not so sweet as kissing you;  
Nor autumn wind in dying trees  
So wistful is as missing you.

And when you are not mine to kiss,  
My every thought is haunting you;  
And when your mouth is mine, I miss  
The wistfulness of wanting you.

## XVI

Here we are together,  
You and I,  
In the amber autumn weather,  
Yet we sigh,  
And are quiet, disenchanted  
By the bliss  
That convinced us that we wanted  
Only this!

Yet is this a cause for weeping  
After all?  
Isn't this a time for keeping  
Festival,  
When the high gods make decision  
And ordain  
That poor Cupid have his vision  
Back again?

## XVII

The lady of my heart is one  
Who has no peer beneath the sun;  
But mortal truths have mortal sequels—  
Beneath the moon I know her equals.

## XVIII

Had we but parted at the start,  
I'd cut some figure in your heart;  
And though the lands between were wide,  
You'd often see me at your side.

But having loved and stayed, my dear,  
I'm always everywhere but here,  
And, still more paradoxical,  
You always see me not at all.

## XIX

My mate, my friend, my love, my life,  
My bosom's—as the phrase is—wife;  
My comrade in the hour of woe—  
An hour whose limits I don't know—  
My star in darkness, solace, balm,  
My prophylaxis, refuge, calm,  
Companion of the million blights  
That plague my liver, purse and lights;  
My pleasant garden in the gloam,  
My all—if you were ever home!

## XX

When I took you for my own,  
You stood 'mong women all alone;  
When I let the magic go,  
You stood with women in a row.



## XXI

In your anger be not just,  
Lest your anger turn to dust;  
Anger will make easy yet  
The bitter footfalls of regret.

## XXII

Darling, mistress of my heart,  
In gray or sunny weather,  
None but a better man shall part  
What God has joined together.

## XXIII

Without you, love, I must contend  
With longing that has never end;  
With loneliness, against whose bars  
The sun is shattered and the stars;  
With silence deeper than the sea,  
That drowns the very thoughts of me.

With you, my sweet, I must endure  
The cross of all who hold unsure  
The precious boon; must ever hear  
The insistent monotone of Fear;  
Must ever toward the zenith ache,  
Abasing self, for your dear sake.



In those serene and potent eyes  
Is there no kindly compromise?  
Will they not grant me this release:  
To see their light and still have peace,  
And let the deeps behind them be  
For sturdier fish the fatal sea?

## EPILOGUE



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## *Epilogue*

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Now that the little penny sword is sheathed,  
The trifling tourney over, the verse dismounted,  
And nothing but a useless half-hour slain,  
I am reminded of a man who breathed  
Into this selfsame spirit lies that counted  
More than his truths or half-truths shall again.  
Even the heartbreak in his joy was good;  
Even the blindness of his thought was better  
Than squint-eyed gazing at the stolid sun  
And getting spots for his enquiring mood:—  
What will you find, then, but the form and letter  
Of things when the meticulous search is done?  
And will you say the moon has not her eyes?  
And will you say the trees have not their speech?  
And will you call the sterile difference wise?  
And will you, then, the dead subtraction teach,  
And say to youth and those remembering youth,  
These ashes are the one and only truth?  
How now, professor? Be that as it may,  
A hell of a lot it matters either way!

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